

HIGHLIGHTS of  
**The Middleborough Antiquarian**

*Devoted to the preservation of local history by*

**MIDDLEBOROUGH HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION, INC.**

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A MINIATURE PORTRAIT  
OF THE TOWN OF MIDDLEBOROUGH









## P R E F A C E

The following articles were selected from "THE MIDDLEBOROUGH ANTIQUARIAN" ....the publication of the MIDDLEBOROUGH HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION, Inc.

The Antiquarian Committee feels that these Highlights taken from the last sixteen (16) years of "The Middleborough Antiquarian" are a fitting salute to the American Revolution Bicentennial.

The Selection Committee hopes you will enjoy these articles which are representative of all the interesting material offered to the members of The Middleborough Historical Association through the pages of "The Antiquarian."

Mildred A. Ashley  
Edna W. Townsend  
Mertie E. Romaine, Chairman

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## "History of Middleborough Churches"

### TERCENTENARY OBSERVANCE SERVICE

#### First Church at The Green

June 1, 1969

by GEORGE WARD STETSON

Members of the clergy, honored guests and friends; a proper treatment of the subject of Middleborough's churches would require a substantial allotment of time. In order to hold it to a reasonable period, I'm suggesting that we consider only our early churches and, with the exception of this parish, make merely a cursory reference to each.

We could not begin without first mentioning Middleborough's three churches of the "Praying Indians." These were located at Titicut, Nemasket and Assawampsett. From early Pilgrim days the desire to Christianize the Indian population had grown, with the greatest success found here in the Plymouth Colony. Before King Philip's War in 1675, there were almost five hundred Praying Indians in the Colony, with the heaviest concentration found at Titicut and Assawampsett. Probably the best known of the ministers who worked among the Indians was Rev. John Eliot who devoted much time and effort here. On one dramatic occasion when hoping to convert King Philip—that savage warrior threateningly grabbed Eliot's jacket and said as he yanked off a button:—"I care no more for your religion than I do for that button!"

No doubt Rev. Eliot's most successful pupil was the Ponkapoag Indian from Dorchester, John Sassamon. He was a graduate of Harvard, had translated the Bible from English into the Indian tongue and had taught in Natick before coming here to preach and teach. Because of Sassamon's ability as a preacher and teacher, John Eliot felt that the London Society should pay the Indian for his efforts. He also acted as Secretary to King Philip and knew of that Chieftan's plans for warfare. Believing it his Christian duty to tell his English friends of the treachery—he so reported to Plymouth. Philip felt he had been betrayed and ordered Sassamon's murder, which was accomplished upon the ice of Lake Assawampsett. However, the deed was observed, the culprits were caught, tried and hung in Plymouth. Infuriated, King Philip then began his plans for open and widespread warfare, resulting in the complete burning of all homes and the mill here in Middleboro.

Though often shabbily treated by the English, the Praying Indians in large numbers remained loyal to our early settlers. Recent archeological excavations at both Assawampsett and North Middleboro sites have uncovered the graves of many of these Praying Indians.

The history of this church, the First Congregational Church at the Green in which we are meeting today, is a history of the town itself—for this is where it actually had its origin. Though not organized until 1694, church services were held in this parish for nearly twenty years prior to that date. Its organizers were sons of the Pilgrims, nine transferring their membership from the mother church in Plymouth. The first Pastor, Rev. Samuel Fuller was a son of Dr. Fuller, the Pilgrim doctor, and all members lived here prior to the town's incorporation in 1669. The Articles of Faith and Covenant

were drawn from those of Pastor John Robinson of the Pilgrim Church in Leyden, Holland. This beautiful building that Daniel Webster called "the most beautiful in all New England" is the fourth to serve the parish. Built in 1828, the sermon of dedication was preached by Rev. Lyman Beecher—father of Henry Ward Beecher.

The third structure, built in 1745, stood less than 150 yards east of this spot. In this third building worshipped many noted men of the Revolutionary period. Chief Justice Peter Oliver, last Chief Justice under the Crown—and a respected citizen of our town, had his own pews built as he desired them, and at times was known to have sung in the choir. Here worshipped his brother Lieut. Governor Andrew Oliver and on occasion Govs. Thomas Hutchinson and James Bowdoin, who had family ties with the Olivers. We know too, that Gov. Thomas Prince, Benjamin Franklin and Sir William Temple occasionally attended services in the third building. From the Training Green facing that building our young men marched to serve their country in the Colonial Wars.

We recognize the beauty of this structure and are told of the great beauty of that third building—especially of its interior and exquisitely designed high pulpit, reached by a flight of winding stairs. Over the lectern suspended from the rafters hung a large sounding board—itself a work of art. In front of the pulpit, facing the congregation, was the Deacons' Bench. I'm told that the roof may have needed attention at one time—for on one windy, snowy Sunday morning, as the deacons were in their places and as the congregation quietly waited, Rev. Sylvanus Conant climbed into his pulpit, only to find that the snow had sifted through and covered his Bible. With a sweep of his right hand he brushed the snow right onto the heads of the solemn deacons below him. The deacons then moved over a bit—only to receive another avalanche from a left-handed sweep.

The second church building was erected in front of where the old school house now stands, facing the Green. It was built in 1700 in the shape of a Cross and served the people for over fifty years.

The first house of worship was built in 1680 about a mile northeast of this spot on Plymouth St., almost directly across from the home of Roger Parent. Here Rev. Fuller preached for many years, though prior to its erection he had walked to and from Plymouth to hold Sunday services. As a salary he received the bountiful sum of 20 pounds. Based roughly on the current rate of exchange it might total \$60 a year—one third was to be paid in silver and the remainder in corn, wheat and rye. As a fringe benefit, the town voted to fence in his land. I should like to make it abundantly clear to the Senator and Representative present that this salary is not to be taken as a base for establishing a wage scale for state employees—though there might be some present who would applaud the thought. It is of interest I'm sure, that in the early days all religious, civic and social activity centered around our churches and that the first three of the churches in this parish were the scene of Middleborough's Town Meetings.

For three-quarters of a century the residents of Titicut, or North Middleborough, had walked a distance of five miles to worship here in this church. A meeting was held in 1744 proposing a new parish at Titicut. In 1748 the North Congregational Parish was formed and a church built. About thirty-



nine acres of land was given to the new parish by three Indians. It comprises the Green, the cemetery and the land where the church and parsonage now stand. A monument in memory of these Indians has been erected in the cemetery near the church. Rev. Isaac Backus of Norwich, Conn. preached here for awhile, leaving in 1756 to form a new church—this being the period of dissension between the Old Lights and the New Lights.

Mrs. Mertie Romaine in her excellent history of Central Congregational Church, assisted by Mrs. Rose Pratt, and written in 1947 for the 100th anniversary of that church, says that by the middle of the last century the center of population had become established at the "Four Corners." As a result of a meeting of these "in town" residents at the Green Church in 1842, an agreement was signed for the purpose of building another house of worship. First a Chapel was built and used for worship by the 200 members as the Central Congregational Society. This Chapel formerly faced South Main St. where the Cooperative Bank stands. By way of dating myself, I can recall having gone to first grade in that Chapel building a few (?) years ago. The Chapel now faces Webster St. and is useful in the church's busy program. In 1847 Central Congregational Church was organized, resulting in the erection of the present very beautiful structure in 1849. Because of growth and activity the building was extensively enlarged and remodeled in the early 1890s. From this parent church here at the Green also grew churches at Rock Village, Lakeville, Rochester and Halifax.

I have mentioned that Rev. Isaac Backus formed a new church after leaving the North Congregational. In 1756 he assisted in constituting the First Baptist Church in North Middleborough. In the files—files I now cherish that my ancestor compiled in preparing our first Town History, I found a letter by A. E. Alden dated 1902 which reads in part: "This was the first Baptist Church formed in an extent of country more than one hundred miles long from Bellingham to the tip of Cape Cod and nearly fifty miles wide between Boston and Rehoboth", adding "it is the oldest in Plymouth County and with few exceptions the oldest in the Commonwealth."

Not only was Isaac Backus a renowned preacher but a recognized historian of ecclesiastical history, an author of many books and articles and a nationally acclaimed patriot. I have sometimes felt he didn't receive the recognition due him for his part as a delegate to the Continental Congress, the Constitutional Conventions and as a delegate to the ratification of the Constitution itself. He preached for over fifty years in this church and is buried in the cemetery near the North Middleborough Green.

From the Backus Church emerged others of this denomination in Middleborough. Though records were lost, 1757 seems to be the accepted date for the Second Baptist on County Road, Lakeville (for until 1853 Lakeville was part—a vital part, of Middleboro.) Then came the Third at Rock and South Middleborough in 1761 and the Fourth, or Old Pond Meeting House, on the shores of Assawampsett in 1797. The Mullein Hill Church on Highland Road was established by members from these first three churches. It is of interest that Deborah Sampson was a member of the Third Baptist. She was severely reprimanded by that body for dressing as a man to fight and

receive wounds in the War of The Revolution as Robert Shurtleff.

One of the Committee chosen to pick a site for the Pond Meeting House was Captain Job Peirce, father of Col. Peter H. Peirce and Major Levi Peirce. It was Major Levi Peirce who built both Central Baptist Church and Peirce Academy. He was encouraged in this decision by his father.

Capt. Job Peirce was a veteran of both the French & Indian War and the Revolution. Shipwrecked while returning from the war in Canada he was given up for dead by his relatives and the townspeople. However, with no communications possible, he arrived in New Bedford unannounced many months later. Walking to Middleboro on that Sunday morning he went directly to church, instead of to his home. We can imagine his surprise to hear the minister in the midst of preaching a sermon to his own memory—and then to learn that a monument had been erected in his honor!

The first of three Central Baptist churches was built on the site of the present church in 1828—the same year that this church was built, and both had the same celebrated architect, Deacon James Sproat. I recall a story my father was fond of repeating; in prayer meeting one evening during the early days of Central Baptist as the congregation was earnestly striving to encourage their new Pastor, one ardent and vocal deacon noted for his lengthy prayers, had droned on at great length—finally, with a great flourish bringing his plea for the Pastor to a dramatic close with these words: "Oh Lord, you keep him humble and we'll keep him poor." It would almost seem that a poverty stricken pastor was a qualification of merit in those days.

Central Methodist Church was formed in 1823, with the members first meeting in the Old Town Hall at the corner of South Main and West Grove Sts. Some eight years later the first building was erected at Fall Brook, the site being chosen as the most central for the membership. Just one hundred years ago in 1869 the present imposing church building was erected. Over the years various alterations and enlargements have been made, adding to the beauty and usefulness of the structure. Recent acquisitions of adjacent and attractive properties are filling the needs of this denomination's continuing growth. The South Middleboro Methodist Church was built upon the site of the old Baptist Church and was reorganized in 1847.

In 1850 thirty or more Roman Catholic families were residents of our town and had become accustomed to traveling to Taunton to attend Mass. With an actively growing membership came the desire to worship in Middleborough. For a time Mass was held in various homes. Later they also worshipped in the Old Town Hall and for ten years Mass was celebrated in the spacious hall over the Peter H. Peirce store. Many of us remember the first church, built in 1880, where the present Sacred Heart Church and attractive Rectory stand. In 1885 the Society was made a separate Parish. In order to meet the growing needs of the Parish, a Convent, Parish Hall and Youth Center have been added. The Church of Sts. Martha & Mary on the shore of Assawampsett now cares for the needs of many who formerly drove to Middleboro for Mass.



The Church of Our Savior (Episcopal) was organized in 1889 by eleven members of the denomination. Having no building of their own the first class was confirmed in the Central Congregational Church. Until 1898 services were held in Peirce Academy, which stood on the site of the Post Office. The present stately and beautiful 15th Century Gothic church is made of granite blocks in the shape of a Cross. At a cost of \$40,000 it was given through the generosity of another member of the Peirce family—Mr. James E. Peirce. He now rests in a crypt of the church he built and served as Treasurer so faithfully until his death. In the last few years a new spacious Episcopal Parish Hall has replaced the one that served the people for many years, but was unable to meet the needs of a growing church.

Also in 1889 the First Unitarian Society was organized at a meeting held in the District Court Room of the then New Town Hall. Twenty-two members were present for the important occasion and Eugene LeBaron was chosen as the Society's first President. In 1891, encouraged by a gift of land and a \$10,000 gift of money, a church was built on Pearl St. near Center St. The land was given by Enoch Pratt of North Middleborough and Baltimore—who had given among other gifts the Pratt Free School in North Middleborough. The money was given by an unnamed donor. For almost twenty years services were conducted there—then in the words of faithful member Henry Burkland, "the building was moved lock,

stock and barrel" to the current location at the corner of South Main St. and Nickerson Avenue.

Now I could wish time might have permitted a more complete record of these churches and that more recent church organizations might have been included. I could wish too, that woven into these thoughts might have been the emphatic truth that the church occupied a vital and extremely important part in the lives of our forebears. These early citizens of Middleborough found great strength, courage, hope and peace in the churches of their choice—qualities that were necessary in meeting the problems of their day—problems every bit as difficult for them as are ours today.

Although there seems to be a trend on the part of some current authors to debunk everything decent, there is ample historical written proof verifying that an abiding faith in God was the very cement that bound and strengthened the firm foundation upon which our country was built. And so today, in this dark and troubled world, I'm sure we can do no less than emulate our Founding Fathers by seeking the strength, the courage, the hope and peace we so earnestly desire—and which can be found in the churches of our choice.



THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
MIDDLEBOROUGH, MASSACHUSETTS





## TWIGS & BRANCHES

of  
Olde Middleborough

in  
Plymouth County  
Massachusetts

by  
MRS. CHARLES DELMAR TOWNSEND  
*Certified Genealogist*

Commonly called 'the Church at the Green'—the First Church of Middleborough, Massachusetts was organized on the 26th of December, 1694 and the Rev. Samuel Fuller ordained as the first minister. Mr. Fuller died on 17 August 1695 at the age of 70. During his pastorate twenty persons were admitted as members of the Church.

Samuel Fuller was included in the group of 'twenty-six purchasers' of the part of Middleborough which was called later 'the first precinct.' The land was purchased of the Indian sachem, Wampatuck in March of 1662. The purchase was confirmed by the government of Plymouth Colony. Deputies were sent to the court at Plymouth from 1669 to 1675. In 1675 the outbreak of the Indian Wars broke up the settlement and the purchasers returned to Plymouth.

In 1679 they returned to Middleborough accompanied by their minister, the Rev. Samuel Fuller, and a permanent settlement was established. The town of Middleborough contains more than one hundred square miles and is one of the largest (if not the largest) towns in the Commonwealth. In 1680 the town provided a house lot and twelve acres of land for their minister, Rev. Samuel Fuller. His salary was "20 pounds to be paid one quarter in silver and the rest in produce, corn at two shillings and wheat at four per bushel."

The original Church records from the organization to the coming of the Rev. Peter Thacher in 1708 have been lost. Mr. Noah Bosworth of Halifax, Massachusetts provided a copy of Rev. Samuel Fuller's account of the Church. This copy was supplied in 1826 by Mr. Bosworth who found it among records of his great grandfather, Ebenezer Fuller. The copy in the possession of Ebenezer Fuller was dated at Middleborough on 8 March 1734.

The list of members was given as:

Samuel Fuller and his wife	John Bennet and his wife
Jonathan Morse and his wife	Abiel Wood and his wife
Samuel Wood	Isaac Billington
Samuel Eaton	Samuel Cutburt
Jacob Tomson and his wife	John Cob, Jun.
Hester Tinkam	The widow-Deborah Barden
Weibrah Bumpas	Ebenezer Tinkham, his wife

The report further stated that Ebenezer Tinkham, Isaac Billington, Jacob Tomsen were baptized. Shortly afterwards the children of John Cob were baptized, namely: John, Martha, Patience - all in their infancy. Also, Lidia Bumpas, the daughter of Weibra Bumpas.

John Bennet, Sen. was ordained Deacon, he was formerly a resident of Beverly, Massachusetts.

On the 10th of April 1738 a confession 'that we are in suitable frames to communicate at the Lord's table together' written by the minister, the Rev. Peter Thacher, was signed by the following members:

Henry Thomas	Nathan Clark	James Raymond
Lemuel Dunham	Benjamin Tucker	Sam'l Barrows, Jr.
Samuel Barrows	Francis Eaton	Edmund Weston
Obadiah Sampson	Hezk'ah Purrington	Barn'as Crossman
Seth Tinkham	Cooms Barrows	Samuel Eddy
Ebenezer Redding	Benjamin White	Thomas Wood
Ephraim Wood	Jonathan Smith	Samuel Sampson
Ichabod Paddock	John Cavender	John Raymond
Samuel Warren	James Smith	David Delano
Nehemiah Bennet	Ezra Clap	John Vaughan
Thomas Tupper	David Alden	Ichabod Tupper
Samuel Eddy, Jr.	Joseph Bates	Nathan Bassett
Samuel Wood	Noah Thomas	Moses Sturtevant
Ebenezer Finney		

In 1740-42 some one hundred and fifty or more persons were admitted to the membership of the Church. This was the period in New England which is frequently referred to as "the great awakening" and it was at this time that all New England churches added appreciably to their membership. During the ministry of the Rev. Peter Thacher from 1709 to 1744 some 466 persons were said to have been admitted to the Church.

Samuel Fuller, the first minister is buried at the oldest cemetery and the inscription on his headstone reads: "Here lyes buried ye body of ye Rev. Samuel Fuller, who departed this life Aug. ye 17th, 1694, in ye 71st year of his age. He was ye 1st minister of ye Church of Christ in Middleborough."

Rev. Fuller was the son of the pilgrim Samuel Fuller. The children of the Rev. Samuel were - Samuel born 1659, Mercy, Experience, Elizabeth, Hannah, John and Isaac. Samuel lived in Rocky Nook, Kingston, Massachusetts. Mercy married Daniel Cole; Experience married James Wood; Elizabeth married Samuel Eaton and Hannah married Eleazer Lewis. The sons, John and Isaac settled in the section of Middleborough which later became the town of Halifax.

After the death of the Rev. Samuel Fuller a Mr. Cushman, afterwards a pastor at Plympton, a Mr. Clap and a Mr. Cutting were successively asked to preach at Middleborough. In August of 1696, Mr. Thomas Palmer was engaged to preach for a quarter of a year at a salary of 13 Pounds. In November 1698 the town voted "that his goods shall be brought from Plymouth at the town's charge." He was charged with misbehavior in the Church and with intemperance. After several 'councils' it was voted to depose him. Records are not complete for these early years but it would appear that he did not preach in the year 1706 but that he sued the parish for his salary. Mr. Palmer remained in town and practiced physic until his death in 1743.





### NOTABLE OLD MIDDLEBORO HOUSE

Eddyville dwelling over 150 years old occupied in the last century by Dr. Stephen Powers, grandfather of Hiram Powers, the distinguished artist.

(This article appeared in The Middleboro Gazette August 14, 1903, and was written by Joseph E. Beals who was active in town affairs of that time and who was an authority on local history. He died in 1909.)

Contributed by Austen L. Beals

Out in the eastern part of the township of Middleboro, near Eddyville, stands the large old two-story house shown in the picture at the head of this sketch. It is now occupied by George B. Lee. There is nothing peculiar in its outward appearance, being simply one of a type of houses built just before the Revolutionary War by persons who had families large enough to require such houses, or who were provided with sufficient means to build them. Its chief point of interest in connection with this sketch is that it was once the residence of Dr. Stephen Powers, who, at that time, was very prominent in the activities of the town and well known and somewhat famed for his professional skill. He was grandfather of Hiram Powers, the noted sculptor.

The house was probably built by Samuel Eddy, Jr., previous to 1746, as he died that year. It was next owned by Nathan Eddy, his son, who conveyed it on May 23, 1761, to Samuel Lanman, mentioning "land and buildings" and describing it as land that formerly belonged to his father, Samuel Eddy. His mother, Lydia, and his wife, Eunice, signed in relinquishment of their rights of dower. Lanman sold to Elias Trask, distiller, March 11, 1762, or, rather, they seem to have exchanged estates, as very soon thereafter Trask conveyed to Lanman an estate in Plymouth on what is now Leyden Street. Trask held it only about a month when he conveyed it on April 13, 1762, to Dr. Stephen Powers for 206 pounds, 12 shillings, 4 d., containing sixty acres, more or less. Dr. Powers, before removing to Woodstock, Vermont, in 1774, conveyed the property to Isaac Tinkham for 388 pounds, 2 shillings, 8 d., Nov. 2, 1773. After one or two other transfers it passed into the Clark name, and will be remembered by many now living as for many years the residence of Harrison Clark.

The ancestors of Dr. Powers came from Waterford, Ireland, about 1680. Their name was originally Power, without the "s," but later they seem to have added that letter. Dr. Powers was a native of Hardwick, Mass., and was born in 1735. He was a son of Benjamin Powers. His father was a farmer, but Stephen resolved upon a different pursuit and took up the study of medicine. After finishing his studies he located in Middleboro as a physician. Soon after beginning his practice he was married to Lydia Drew, daughter of John and Sarah Drew, formerly of Halifax. The record says they were married March 20, 1760,

by Rev. Sylvanus Conant. His wife was also born in 1735. They joined the First Church in Middleboro July 4, 1762.

Their children, all born in Middleboro, were as follows: Susanna, born December 14, 1760; Mary, born March 2, 1766; Stephen, born August 6, 1767; John Drew, born November 17, 1769; Lydia, born March 15, 1772. Of these children Stephen, Jr., not John, as the history of the First Church gives it, was the father of Hiram Powers, who afterwards became celebrated as the sculptor.

Although he was active in his professional life, he also conducted a large farm, as the conveyances show that he purchased about 60 acres. About the year 1770 it began to be the town's talk that there was a new opening way "up country" where men of energy, pluck and enterprise could very soon build up for themselves fortunes in the wilderness of Vermont. The method of travel at that day was mainly by horseback. In 1772 he started out with his horse for a trip to this wonderful country so much talked about. He directed his course to Woodstock, Vermont, where some of his friends had gone before him. He seems to have found the situation very much to his liking, as he made purchases of land amounting to about 300 acres, remarking as he made one of his purchases, that he would take all the land there was on the mountain side worth having. He also arranged to have a log house built for him, to be ready when he should move to the new country.

He then returned to Middleboro and began his plans for removal. He sold his place at a good profit above its cost to him and closed up his Middleboro affairs.

His brother, Abraham, seems to have been here with him, perhaps having the care of the farm. The records show that Abraham Powers was married to Deborah Simmons, March 26, 1772, by Rev. Sylvanus Conant. He seems to have taken up land and settled in Woodstock before the doctor did. A brother of the doctor's wife had also preceded him in his settlement in the wilderness.

In 1774 the doctor, with his family and belongings started for their future home in the wilderness, to find, on their arrival, that the log house which he had provided for them was not ready and he was therefore obliged to put up a shanty for temporary accommodations.

His family consisted of his wife, five children, and a negro slave called Cato. The real name of this slave was Christopher Malbone, but he was usually called Cato Boston. The doctor purchased him for 20 pounds or about \$100, just before leaving for Vermont. He was then about ten years old. He served in the doctor's family for many years, growing up with the children. He was full of all sorts of pranks and mischief, and for laziness and lying was unexcelled. When the war of 1814 broke out he enlisted, went into the service and was never heard from again.

The doctor is described as being about six feet in height, of vigorous build, dark complexion, with dark hair and eyes, well fitted physically for pioneer life. He was not given to dress or personal adornment. He was accustomed to wear a pair of buckskin trousers and is said to have made a handy use of them in sharpening his instruments for performing his surgical operations, so that in time they became considerably soiled.

He was a regular attendant at church while in Middleboro, and being a good singer, was very prominent in the choir, perhaps chorister, as he was the choir leader for many years after removing to Woodstock. He was also very jealous of his reputation as a musician, and it was said in later years by one of his grandchildren, that perhaps one reason for leaving Middleboro was that somebody had said that there were others in Middleboro who could sing as well as Doctor Powers. In his connection with the choir he was probably associated with Judge Oliver, who was his rival in musical skill. It may also be that politics had something to do with it. Judge Oliver, being the King's chief justice, was an adherent of the crown, while the doctor was a radical whig, standing up for his country all the time and every time and at all hazards. It is said that he was near by at the



battle of Bunker Hill, and helped to dress the wounds of those who had been hurt in battle, having, with patriotic foresight, anticipated the clash of arms and happening there at the opportune moment.

The doctor was prominent in town affairs at Woodstock, having at times held different town offices; also in church matters, being very frequently chosen to serve upon different committees for special services; and his counsel was authority in medical matters in all the country roundabout.

It is interesting to note that the history of Woodstock and of the adjoining town of Hurland and Hartford shows that there were hundreds of Middleboro people among the early settlers of those thriving communities, and that very many of them were the prominent men of affairs in the settlements.

Dr. Powers died November 27, 1809, aged 74 years. His widow died at the house of her son, John D. Powers, August 23, 1823, aged 88.



### THE HISTORY OF A COLLECTION

Grace E. Clark

(Eve Lynn '86)

(In memory of my dear little daughter — Gladys, Little Peter, or Tabitha Ann — by Her Mother.)

(Most memorabilia, whether single pieces or collections, come to historical museums with no history or provenience. We are fortunate—most fortunate—not only in having the privilege of preserving this collection of miniature “little people” or toys, but also in having the life history of the little girl whose life they represent. Ed’s. note.)

Little Peter, Tabitha-Ann and Gladys Clark are all the same little girl who was born in Middleborough, December 19th, 1901. This collection was her life, call them toys if you will. Keeping house for her **Funny Family** was as real to her as your own family and friends.

She lived in a leather and aluminum jacket from the time she was a year and a half old until she was fourteen, a victim of spinal meningitis. Specialists had consultation after consultation to no avail; even the “Big Doctor” could find no cure. We carried her in our arms or in a baby go-cart, and when she reached ten she was still only three feet tall. Being so small, little things pleased her more than the usual size dolls and toys—and here the story of the collection starts.

One day a lady who ran a sweater business, having heard about Little Peter, called to say she had lots of odds and ends she thought we might use. Her Grandfather always called her Little Peter until I read her the story about Aunt Tabitha Ann—this tickled her so much that from then on we called her Tabitha Ann. I picked out a ball of honey-dew color yarn and began to wind it while she watched, and almost without thinking I made a little doll—we called her Kitty, and the Funny Family was born. Little Boy Tommy came before Father Bob and Mama Sally, and baby Jocie followed. Then of course Kitty had to have a doll, so we named her Maggie, and then came Spreckles the cat, and Sport the dog.

Next of course this Little Family had to have a house, so her father built a table that went across the bed, and a card-board doll-house. Eventually, before Little Peter passed away, this Little Family—this Little Funny-Family lived in a great big two story house. I wrote the story of Little Gladys and her Funny Family for the Providence Journal Evening Bulletin, and it ran under the heading “Twilight Yarns” for over five years. The family grew, and the youngsters left home as all youngsters do—some went to California, Tommie went to camp with Papa Bob who was then with the 43rd Signal Corps. Eighteen of them went to Roxie to be sent to the Children’s Hospital in New York City. One of the family went with the A.B.C. man on his “Always Be Careful” trip south. Roxie later reported that each theater wanted to keep its own doll. A set of dolls went to John Martin. Mrs. Anderson, “Story Teller” of X.Y.Z. Radio came to us to ask help in her work. The yarn family grew and grew, all from the life and love of one little girl named Gladys Clark—Little Peter—and Tabitha Ann. They traveled to the little sufferers in the Rhode Island Hospital—and one little girl wrote a letter thanking us for the doll—her name was Mary Smith—and thereby hangs another tale.

Gladys was thrilled. She thought and dreamed about Mary Smith as a golden haired, blue eyed little girl, and she wanted her to come and visit us. As it turned out, Mary was a little colored girl with a hip disease, but Gladys thought it over and exclaimed: “It makes no difference—I love her just the same.” (Ed’s. note—I wish there were a billion little girls in the world who were such real Christians—who might help to wipe out the narrow, selfish race prejudices that today threaten world peace.)

The only time Gladys ever cried was when one of her friends married, and asked her to be one of her bridesmaids. We worked it out and went to the wedding, and Gladys was one of the flower girls as she was just the right size! And what a time we had making the dress and fitting shoes. Of course everything she wore had to be made to fit, and no ready made apparel could possibly suit. I could write and write about my little girl, but I must stop. It has been hard after all these years to unpack and handle again this little Funny Family and all its belongings. I am sorry now I destroyed the doll house, but I just didn’t want anyone else to have it. I am very glad I spoke to the Museum Mouse about all these tiny furnishings, and to know that they will be preserved in the museum on Jackson Street. Little Peter loved tiny china dogs—and I know there was a tiny Noah’s Ark—and, Oh, lots of other things—and one of these days I’ll find them and give them to the museum.

(Ed’s note: This collection of tiny memorabilia is hard to picture. The tiny rag dolls Mrs. Clark made for Little Peter—Tabitha Ann or Gladys are perhaps not historical rarities, but the house furnishings of this Funny Little Family, through gifts from many, many friends cover a period of many years. The ice boxes and stoves for instance—none of them over 2½ inches—date from ca. 1876 to 1935. The tiny copper kettle was made from a penny. The dishes and sets of chinaware were sold by Sears Roebuck during the Gay Nineties. There are hundreds of pieces, and I doubt if any museum in the country can match the collection. Our very sincere thanks to a devoted mother, author and historian.)



### THREE IMPORTANT MEN IN THE HISTORY OF MIDDLEBOROUGH

Ernest E. Thomas

In writing about three prominent men in Middleborough I have chosen one from the colonial and Revolutionary War period, one from the Revolutionary to the Civil War period, and one from our modern times. The three I have chosen are not necessarily the three most prominent men of their time, but they are men who played an important part in the history of the town.

My first choice is Rev. Isaac Backus who came to North Middleborough in about 1746 as pastor of the Congregational Church which he served for about ten years. He then became pastor of the Baptist Church there which he served for fifty more years. The church in North Middleborough was the nineteenth Baptist Church in Massachusetts at the time it was reorganized by Elder Backus.

Elder Backus became very active in the Baptist movement. In the 1760's two other Baptist churches were organized in Middleborough — the second Baptist Church which was located in what is now Lakeville and the third which was and is located at Rock. Elder Backus was interested in the organization of these churches and others in this area. In 1771 he was made agent for all the Baptist churches in Massachusetts.

Impressive as his record of over sixty years in the ministry in this vicinity may be, his activities reached out into other fields of endeavor. His salary as pastor probably was not more than \$200 a year and he certainly lived on a bigger income than that. He was a good business man as his account book shows. One activity of his was buying and selling to the several foundries in the region, Judge Oliver's and others. He would contract for lumber from those who owned woodland, sell the lumber to the foundries and take his pay in iron-ware and then sell the pots and kettles to those who dealt in iron products.

He was also an author who had around fifty books printed. Most of these were sermons or theological treatises. He wrote a history of the Christian churches in New England in three volumes, and then wrote a condensed one volume of the same work. His account book shows where he placed an order at one time for one thousand copies of the abridged history. He sold all of these histories for at least \$10 per volume which gave him a very handsome profit. Some of his books he sold through agents but many he placed in his saddle-bags when he went on his numerous trips through the country, as far south as the Carolinas, and these he sold without the need of any agent.

He was very active in politics. He went to the First Continental Congress at Philadelphia in 1774. He was not a delegate of the colony; he maybe went as agent of the Baptist churches in Massachusetts, or maybe he went just as an individual. At any rate he was there and took part in some of the discussion. This Congress was not a legislative body but rather a convention to consider the grievances the Colonies had against England and to try to get more cooperation from the mother country. Meeting soon after the Boston Tea Party, it failed in this endeavor and within a year the Revolutionary War had begun; the Second Continental Congress came into being and directed the conduct of the War. Elder Backus did not attend the Second Continental Congress but he did go to the Massachusetts Convention that was called to vote on the Constitution of the United States. Elder Backus fought in this Convention against religious requirements for officials in the new government. He was probably as instrumental as any one man in establishing the principle of separation of church and state.

Rev. Isaac Backus was not a graduate of any college although he was a widely-read man. When he was nearly seventy-five years old Brown University granted him an honorary degree of Master of Arts.

Elder Backus died in 1806 and he is buried in the cemetery close by the North Middleborough Congregational Church.

About seventy-five years ago an impressive monument was erected over his grave. It is visited by many people annually, especially those who look upon him as one of the pioneers in the development of the Baptist Church in America.

My second selection was made after considerable thought—Colonel Peter H. Peirce. His permanent influence on Middleborough was largely brought about after his death and was something of which he was unaware and had not planned. Most of his influence on the town was due to the fact that the fortune he built up was left to the town of Middleborough by his son Thomas S. Peirce.

Colonel Peter Peirce was an outstanding business man. Not only did he operate a large and successful general store but he was also interested in real estate and in several of the foundries that flourished in this vicinity. He was also interested in politics and served several times in the General Court. He was interested in military affairs and served in the War of 1812 and later in the local militia where he gained the title of colonel.

I suspect that his brother Levi Peirce did as much for his own generation as did Colonel Peter Peirce and maybe more. Levi Peirce developed the present business center of Middleborough, was postmaster for thirty-two years, helped organize the Baptist Church in Middleborough and gave generously to the church as well as for the formation of Peirce Academy.

I decided, nevertheless, to write about Peter rather than Levi. Certainly the money left to the town by Thomas S. Peirce has done many things for the town that the town would not have done for itself. A fund of \$500,000 was given to the town to be handled by a board of trustees and used for the betterment of the town. Also about \$100,000 was left for a public library. Half of this amount was for the erection of a building and the rest was set aside, the income from which was for the purchase of books. As a result of this particular gift Middleborough has one of the best public libraries for a town of its size to be found anywhere in the state.

The trustees of the Peirce Fund have done many things for the town. The business course in the high school was set up by them and for several years the salary of the head of that department was paid from this fund. The business department still is helped by this money. The various school bands have had great help, particularly in the securing of uniforms. The playground was set up in part by money from this bequest and the summer playground program gets a great deal of help. As a result, Middleborough has one of the best summer playground programs to be found in Massachusetts. The Peirce Estate carried a large share of the cost of the present fire station and the remodeling of the Peirce store into the present slightly Court House and Police Station.

These are only some of the many things done by the trustees of the Peirce Estate over the past sixty years. The fund still exists and many more things will be done in the future for the benefit of the town.

I might add that the late Chester Weston who was employed by Thomas S. Peirce had a good deal to do with bringing Mr. Peirce to think of leaving his money, or a large part of it, to the town of Middleborough.

The third person I am going to write about is Walter Sampson. Probably a third of the people living in Middleborough today knew Mr. Sampson as a wonderful teacher and as a disciplinarian whose methods were both successful and unique. He was principal of Middleborough High School for over thirty years, and I never heard of a parent or pupil who ever spoke of him except in terms of the highest praise and appreciation.

Mr. Sampson was born in Lakeville on the day the Battle of Fredericksburg was being fought. He attended Middleborough High School and graduated in 1882. During the time he was in high school he walked daily from his home to the school and back again, a distance of seven miles each morning and night. He went to Dartmouth College from which he graduated in 1886.



It is interesting to note that in the period from 1880 to 1890 at least four graduates of Middleborough High School went to Dartmouth, and this was a period when it was not a very common practice for boys to go to college, especially country boys. Three of these, at least, were country boys: Judge Nathan Washburn was one of the class of 1882, my uncle Lyman Thomas was 1884 and Walter Sampson and George Stetson were 1886.

The modern Middleborough High School was established in 1873 and the first class to graduate from it was the class of 1876. A Dartmouth graduate, James H. Willoughby, was the principal at this time and was here for a period of maybe fifteen years. He was a good school man and made Middleborough High School into a school with an excellent reputation. Undoubtedly it was his influence that sent these boys up into the north country for a college education.

After Mr. Sampson graduated in 1886 he taught school in Vermont for several years. It was there he was married. He came to Middleborough in 1890 and immediately began his long and outstanding career. It has been said that Mark Hopkins on one end of a log and a boy on the other end made a college. In much the same way it could be said that Walter Sampson made a high school. He was interested in his pupils and it was his encouragement that caused so many of them to go to college. His own alma mater was the school a great many of them chose to attend. He loaned a good many boys money so that they could finish their college course, and Mr. Leonard Tillson told me that out of all the money he loaned in this way he lost less than \$100.

Mr. Sampson, as I have noted, encouraged a good many boys to go to Dartmouth College. He did this without thinking whether or not they would help out the football team in its annual struggles with Princeton and Harvard. Finally Dartmouth College awarded him the honorary degree of Master of Pedagogy, a particular honor, for the degree was created for him; it was never given before and has never been awarded since.

Mr. Sampson's influence on this town over a period of thirty years was terrific. I doubt if any man over a period of equal length was ever so great a force for good in Middleborough; and yet Mr. Sampson was essentially a very modest and unassuming man. He never held any elective office although he was a member of the Board of Library Trustees. He never travelled very far afield, and I suppose his name was known to few people outside of Middleborough, yet his influence was immense. Sampy was truly one of the rarest of individuals — a great teacher.

He lies buried across the road from his beloved home at Mullein Hill in Lakeville where he used to go and work in his orchard. He lies under a stone as simple and as unpretentious as was the man himself. The inscription on the stone reads — with no embellishments —

WALTER SAMPSON

(Delivered at a meeting of the Middleborough  
Historical Association, November 4, 1963)



## THE CASE OF THE GUN CARRIAGE WHEELS

JUNE 10th, 1775

Lawrence B. Romaine

In the archives of the Middleborough Historical Museum sits a letter written by Judge Peter Oliver to Governor-elect Stephen Hopkins of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations on June 10th, 1775. It is otherwise unknown to American history, except that it was once reprinted in 1939 in an issue of the American Autograph Journal and therein offered for sale. From the unusual contents of this letter I present a questionable brief of the case.

## THREE IMPORTANT WOMEN IN THE HISTORY OF MIDDLEBOROUGH

by

Karyl Benson Swift

### DEBORAH SAMPSON

The story of Deborah Sampson helps us, who live nearly two hundred years later, to understand the intense drama and romance of the American Revolution. Through the actions of this one woman we are able to feel the strength and courage of our ancestors, the trials and hardships and the patriotism. On the other hand, we also see the odd circumstances under which some either joined or managed to resist the fight. Deborah Sampson's story is sustained in the town of Middleborough through tradition and still exists today.

Deborah was born in Plympton on December 17, 1760, of honorable ancestry. One of these ancestors came to Plymouth in 1629 and had been a member of the English colony at Leyden.

Deborah's father died in a shipwreck when she was five. Her mother was unable to keep her family together so Deborah was shifted about for five years. For a while she lived with Mrs. Thatcher, widow of the Rev. Peter Thatcher. Then at the age of ten Deborah was bound to Jeremiah Thomas until she turned eighteen. In the Thomas family Deborah did farm chores and was eventually owner of a small flock of sheep to produce wool for her weaving.

Although Deborah grew up with other members of her own sex, she associated with the boys in the Thomas family since there were more boys than girls. This led her to pick up several masculine traits. She was quite athletic for an eighteenth century girl.

Deborah continued to live with the Thomas family until she was eighteen. At that time she was offered the job of teaching school at the Four Corners Village in Middleborough. She taught two summer sessions and during this time boarded with Abner Bourne who lived nearby.

One evening Deborah donned men's clothing and joined the men at a local tavern. Rev. Stillman Pratt tells the story of this little fling and others have confirmed his tale as true. A negro woman named Jennie worked for Capt. Benjamin Leonard in Middleborough. Deborah Sampson stayed with Captain Leonard for a time. One evening, aided by Jennie, Deborah dressed herself in a suit of clothes belonging to the Captain's son Samuel and set out for town. Her first stop was at the recruiting office where she enlisted in the army under the name of Timothy Thayer. She received the bounty paid to recruits and headed for a tavern where she "drank and behaved in a very noisy and indecent manner." Later, she crept home to Jennie. In the morning, she returned to her female clothing and spent a good deal of the bounty on other clothes for herself.

When the time came for the enlisted men to join their regiments, one Timothy Thayer was nowhere to be found. His true identity was soon discovered, however, because an elderly woman at the recruiting office had remarked that he held his pen "as Deb Sampson did." Eventually Jennie admitted her part in the affair and Deborah was made to return the unspent part of the bounty.

Before her second enlistment, Deborah spent many hours making the decision. She hated to leave the Thomases who stuck by her even after her wild escapades and she was quite concerned over the worry she might cause her mother after she disappeared. Finally, she walked to Bellingham, Massachusetts, and enlisted under the name of Robert Shurtleiffe, which was the name of an older brother. On the way, she encountered other Middleborough acquaintances who did not recognize her in men's clothing so she felt quite safe. Her original plan was to travel about as a gentleman but lack of funds forced her to do what many young men were doing—join the army.

Deborah was sent to West Point where she participated in several raiding parties. In Tarrytown, New York, Deborah suf-



ferred a wound which she treated herself to avoid discovery. She suffered alone under the protests of the other soldiers until the wound healed. Deborah was then appointed orderly to General Patterson in Philadelphia. While there she contracted a fever and was forced to enter the hospital. The doctor who treated her promised not to reveal her secret, but he later revealed Deborah's true identity in letters to both Gen. George Washington and Gen. Patterson.

After her discharge, Deborah headed home but due to the threats of the Baptist Church in Middleborough, of which Deborah had been a member, she went to Stoughton, Massachusetts. Here she worked for a farmer and assumed the name of Ephriam Sampson. To amuse herself, she flirted with the country girls. In the Spring, Deborah again resumed her female identity and in April of 1784, married a farmer named Benjamin Gannet from Sharon. They had a son and two daughters but none possessed their mother's energy or thirst for adventure.

In 1783, Deborah had been granted an invalid bonus of one hundred dollars by the state of Massachusetts and in 1805 Congress granted her a pension of four dollars a month. In 1818, the pension was doubled until her death in 1827.



### LAVINIA WARREN

The story of Middleboro's "little people" is as timeless as a fairy-tale and equally as popular. To fully appreciate Lavinia Warren, it is quite necessary to first meet her husband, Charles Stratton, who became famous as General Tom Thumb. Tom Thumb was a perfectly formed little man but he never attained a height of over forty-five inches. He was discovered in his hometown of Bridgeport, Connecticut, at the age of four, by Phineas T. Barnum the great showman. Little Charles was entered in the American Museum which was forerunner to Barnum's circus. The museum showed off unusual people and was extremely popular. Barnum gave Charles the name General

Tom Thumb and billed him as being eleven years old although he was not yet five years old.

Tom Thumb and Barnum traveled widely. They were received by Queen Victoria on three different occasions. Later, Tom was made a partner to Barnum and at twenty-four, he was a very rich little midget.

Meanwhile, in Middleboro, another midget was born of normal-sized parents and christened Mercy Lavinia Bump. This little girl appeared no different than her six normal-sized brothers and sisters but as she reached her first birthday, her growth slowed and soon ceased. At the age of ten, Mercy was full grown. She measured thirty-nine inches high. A younger sister Minnie was even smaller. Mercy learned to sew, knit and cook like all other New England girls and grew very fond of music, art and poetry. At sixteen, she qualified to teach the third grade in Middleboro. Mercy Lavinia Warren was smaller than many of her pupils.

Women of this era were just discovering the value of femininity in the world and little Miss Bump decided to follow the trend and spent a summer aboard her cousin's Mississippi showboat. She returned to Middleboro and her teaching position in the fall, and would probably have lived a very quiet life there had not P. T. Barnum discovered her in 1862. Barnum managed to convince her family that she would never make any money teaching school and whisked her off to New York. Barnum changed her name to Lavinia Warren because he was quite certain no one would pay to see a midget named "Bump." The name Warren had been her mother's maiden name.

Tom Thumb was enjoying wide mid-western publicity and met Lavinia when he stopped in to see what was new at the Museum. After once meeting her he immediately went to Barnum and announced that he wanted to marry Lavinia. Barnum sensed the chance for publicity and quickly informed Tom

of his competition. Commodore Nutt was another midget at the Museum. At eighteen he weighed twenty-four pounds and was a head shorter than General Tom Thumb. The Commodore had also fallen in love with Lavinia and had a bit of an advantage since he met her first. Barnum publicized the little triangle quite widely. A bit of rivalry between General Tom Thumb and Commodore Nutt interested the public, however, and the attractive Lavinia enjoyed every minute of it.

General Tom Thumb proposed to Lavinia Warren at P. T. Barnum's home and she accepted on the condition that her mother approved. Mrs. Bump did approve but only after being convinced it was not just a publicity stunt. After this, the Commodore proposed to Minnie Warren, Lavinia's sister, but was refused.

The wedding of Tom and Lavinia took place on Tuesday, February 10, 1863 in Grace Church, New York, and with Barnum in charge, the publicity hit the front pages. The two thousand wedding guests included such dignitaries as members of the cabinet and Foreign Ministers. The wedding itself was performed by Dr. I. W. Putnam, pastor of Miss Warren's church in Middleboro, Rev. Junius Willey, rector of St. John's church where Charles was christened and Dr. Thomas H. Taylor, rector of Grace church. Tiny Lavinia marched down the aisle looking radiantly beautiful in a satin gown. Her many jewels were gifts of the groom. Her star-shaped bouquet was made to order at his request. Minnie Warren served as maid-of-honor and Commodore Nutt swallowed his pride to act as best man for the General. The tiny couple stood atop a grand piano to receive their guests at the reception.

After the wedding, the young couple traveled to Washington, D. C., to meet President and Mrs. Lincoln. Soon, Barnum wanted them to go on tour to Europe with Minnie and the Commodore. General Tom Thumb was tired of traveling by then but consented to go to please Lavinia who had not yet had the opportunity. They were received by all royalty of Europe as well as dignitaries of the United States. These perfectly formed little people were not only a novelty, but they were also entertaining and lively conversationalists. On one tour, they became known in Australia, India and Japan.

At last, General and Mrs. Tom Thumb settled down in New England. They built a home in Middleboro and alternated between there and Charles' home in Bridgeport. The story that the Tom Thumb's had a child was merely a hoax perpetrated by Barnum. Minnie Warren had married and died giving birth to a six pound child. Lavinia was unable to have any children of her own and after Minnie's death, fled from Middleboro to forget.

General Tom Thumb died of a stroke at the age of forty-five. He was buried in Bridgeport's Mountain Grove Cemetery under a forty-foot shaft of Italian marble topped with a life-sized statue of himself.

Lavinia was left a widow with very little money. She toured the country with a midget opera company, popped up in Lilliputian villages at World's Fairs and even made four movie comedies. Two years later, she married Count Primo Magri, an Italian dwarf. For a time they lived in Marion, Ohio, in an exhibition home stocked with midget furniture. Then they turned Lavinia's Middleboro home into a general store for tourists and wintered in Coney Island among the fat ladies and India-rubber men.

Lavinia Warren died in 1919 at the age of seventy-eight. She is buried beside her husband under a small headstone marked, "His Wife."

### NINA LOUISE SEYMOUR

Nina Louise Seymour is the only woman who will be named on the new Middleboro War Memorial. This is but one indication of the pride Middleboro people have in Nina Sey-

mour, Registered Nurse.

Nina was born in Erving, Massachusetts and moved to Middleboro with her family when she was fifteen years old. She graduated from the Middleboro High School in the class of 1910. After high school Nina entered nurse's training at Hart Private Hospital in Roxbury. For the next five years Miss Seymour served as district nurse in Middleboro. By this time, World War I had broken out and the strong feelings of patriotism that developed apparently gripped Middleboro's young nurse. Nina chose to join the Red Cross Nursing Corps in June of 1918.

She sailed for France late in the summer but her new career was far too short, for only one month after her arrival at U. S. Base Hospital 82 in Toul, she contracted pneumonia. The army medical personnel administered excellent care but to no avail. She was buried in Toul, France for seven months and then her body was sent home to Middleboro. Services were conducted at the Church of Our Savior by the Rev. J. Gordon Carey, rector. Since then she has remained at rest beside her father in Central Cemetery.

The citizens of the town contributed \$750 for a bronze plaque to be erected in memory of their war heroine. The plaque was purchased, inscribed and hung in the Middleboro Public Library. In 1959 the library's executive board voted to remove the plaque from the wall since the space was needed and the District Nursing Association no longer met there. In 1962 Mrs. Frances Wiksten, a reporter for the New Bedford Standard Times, inquired as to the whereabouts of the plaque. It was discovered that it had been stored in the library attic with other historic memorabilia. The American Legion of Middleboro, of which Nina was once a member, also took interest in the issue and removed the plaque from its dusty resting place. The plaque has since been sand-blasted and hung in the corridor outside the office at St. Luke's Hospital in Middleboro. This appears to be a proper resting place for a plaque in memory of a nurse.

(Paper delivered at a meeting of the Middleborough Historical Association, November 4, 1963)

Editor's Note. Although many books, booklets and articles have been published about Tom and Lavinia, we feel that Mrs. Swift's story is more intimate and local, and deserves a lasting place in print. From such booklets as "Sketch of the Life, Personal Appearance, Character and Manners of Charles S. Stratton, The Man in Miniature, known as General Tom Thumb, and his wife Lavinia Warren Stratton — etc." New York: 1867 — and P. T. Barnum's own "Struggles and Triumphs of Forty Years" New York 1870 — to many more recent articles in such publications as the New-York Historical Society Quarterly, Yankee Magazine and many others, there is a wealth of both historical and pleasant reading available — BUT — it is mostly about Tom. (I assume you are all familiar with Mertie Witbeck's story in the Antiquarian Vol. V, No. 3 for last June.) Copies of Vol. V, No. 3 are still at the Museum in the Peirce Grocery Store for sale at 25c each while they last.)

## THE MIDDLE BOROUGH

Lawrence B. Romaine, Curator

Backalong in the 17th century before Great Britain really knew quite what America was, a small community grew up about halfway between Plymouth and the Providence Plantations. It was the half-way house, or middle borough, between these two established villages even though it was not recognised or halloved by act of incorporation until 1669. Governor Bradford refers to it in his diary in 1621<sup>1</sup>

"An Indean towne called Namassakett 14. miles to ye west of this place." Until 1669 we were a part of "Plimoth Plantation," and even then had to fight for the separate identity of Middleberry.

During the last three hundred years, Providence Plantations, New Netherlands and Boston have grown like ragweed and become three of the greatest cities in the world. Plymouth has remained a small town, but, with Plymouth Rock as a spring-board, has become the nation's Blamey Stone and spread itself over the horizon of the American tourist like a Barnum & Bailey tent. Everyone knows the Plymouth story, but very few realise the 17th century importance of its little neighbor Middleborough. John Alden didn't place his foot on any important rocks in "Namassakett," but I believe that if he had lived longer he might have claimed our community as sacred to American history.

Three hundred and one years after Governor Bradford first mentioned us, a group of citizens met to form an organization to preserve local history. Their enthusiasm attracted others, and thirty seven years later the association found itself faced with growing pains. The ever increasing collections of memorabilia had been housed in the public library in one room, and little by little was beginning to ooze into the attic, store room and upper gallery; even the steel files were overflowing. Something had to be done — the trouble was that the savings account and savings bonds were not keeping pace with Cephas Thompson portraits and General Tom Thumb's memorabilia.

Something or other amused Dame Fortune about this time, and she smiled at us. The town had acquired the property of the Peirce estate including several of the old mill houses on Jackson street, and, finding little revenue therein, decided to sell or bulldoze them into eternity for a park and parking lot. The association begged for two of them, with an acre bordered by the high school athletic field, the old Peirce Store (now the court house and police station) and facing the Girl Scout headquarters on Jackson street — a fine safe border for a museum!, and acquired title for one dollar.<sup>2</sup> At about the same time the Middleborough Antiquarian was born, and now covers national, state and local libraries, historical societies and museums from coast to coast. We were in business, and the call for volunteers went forth.

<sup>2</sup> See Weston's History of the Town of Middleborough for further details of the Peirce family — Peirce Academy, Peirce Library and finally a half million bequest to the town.

Our museum houses were two family mill homes built at about the time Colonel Peter H. Peirce opened his grand old store that served the town for over a century. A wing was added on the corner house shortly afterwards, and we believe three families once lived here though we can not prove it; but, in ca. 1830, why not? Though side by side right here in New England, one carpenter-builder planned his kitchens in the basement and the other on the ground floor. To date we have almost finished twenty of the thirty rooms for exhibits — and with contributions, auctions, cake sales, the Lion's Club minstrel show, Little Theater Group performances, school collections, rummage sales and the generosity of many other organizations, still have a balance in the bank for 1964 plans and projects.

The tremendous growth of interest in American history over the past years is beyond the average imagination, and the growth of historical libraries and museums unbelievable. Without a proper 1620 ROCK, a small community like ours, oozing with background and unrecognized prestige must blow its own little horn or be buried and smothered in the hugeness of 20th century progress. We have accepted the challenge, and here is our story. As Fred Allen used to say on radio every week — "Shall we go, Portland?"

<sup>1</sup> "Of Plimoth Plantation. From the Original Manuscript." Published in Boston in 1893 as "Bradford's History." Available in most libraries.





**SMALL POX CEMETERY**  
**Brook Street**  
**1777**

In 1778 Captain Eddy had been assigned as a staff officer to General Washington and was with that command at the Battle of Monmouth in 1778 where it is reported that he was standing close enough to General Washington to hear Washington criticize General Charles Lee, saying, "Had you taken the position with your command as I directed, you would have captured the whole British Army."<sup>26</sup> Captain Eddy was to serve with the Continental army until 1781 when he went on an extended leave and was not recalled.

By 1778, Middleborough was to claim the distinction of recruiting perhaps the most interesting soldier to fight in the American Revolution. Deborah Sampson, who was a member of the South Middleboro church and had taught school for a time at the Four Corners, joined the Continental Army as Robert Shurtleff.<sup>27</sup> Deborah fought and was wounded in the New York Campaign, but took care of her own wound and served until she came down with a fever and was discovered by an army surgeon, who reported her deception. She was honorably discharged by General Washington with a commendation for her service in 1779.<sup>28</sup>

Another event in the history of Middleborough of this time which deserves mention was the one really violent act against the Tory element in the town. In 1778 a group of enlightened patriots who apparently believed fighting was much better done at home against a force of no resistance decided to take action against the unoccupied residence of Judge Peter Oliver who by that time had moved himself and most of his possessions to London. The Hall, as it was called, was burned to the ground in the early winter of 1778.<sup>29</sup> However the home of the Judge's son, Peter, was left standing and is still occupied by the descendants of the Oliver family today.

Middleborough was called upon repeatedly for men and supplies throughout the years of the Revolution and throughout the early years was seemingly able to answer most of the requests by the General Court of Massachusetts. By 1778 the town was having trouble recruiting twenty-six men for the Continental Army. In that same year the General Court ordered that a fine be imposed on the town for not meeting its quota of men. At a town meeting held in April of 1779 the town voted that each delinquent company be held responsible for its own quota, and pay its own fine, but in a May meeting that same year changed its vote, and decided to ask the General Court to relieve the town of paying the fine.<sup>30</sup>

In a town meeting in April of 1780 it becomes apparent that there had been some trouble with service in the Continental Army as the town voted to request that neighboring towns join them in requesting the General Court to refuse to allow their men to serve under Continental officers, but on a second vote taken on the petition in May, 1780, it was voted not to send the petition.<sup>31</sup>

Meanwhile soldiers had to be paid and the families had to live and the town recognized its obligations to these factors. In the years starting with 1778 the pay for soldiers was to be thirty pounds per year with interest paid back to nine months.<sup>32</sup> In 1779 the pay of thirty pounds was voted to the men of the militia who served in Rhode Island.<sup>33</sup> In 1780 the town voted to pay soldiers in produce, silver or iron for their service, and also to ask neighboring towns if any men were available for service.<sup>34</sup> If a man did not complete his service he would be paid only for those days which he did serve. In October of the same year it was voted to pay each man four hundred dollars in paper money or an equal sum in iron.<sup>35</sup> In 1781 the pay is again raised to fifty dollars in silver for enlistment of those who would serve three years, and then fifty more silver dollars for every six months of service thereafter. A promise to pay interest on this money was also offered to encourage the men to sign.<sup>36</sup>

In February of 1777 the town voted to set prices on farm products and labor as set by the General Court.<sup>37</sup> In October of that same year the first provision of 200 pounds was set aside to care for the families of the soldiers.<sup>38</sup> In January of 1778 another two hundred pounds was provided for those families,<sup>39</sup> and in 1780 five hundred pounds was set aside by the town on the recommendation of the committee which had been set up to care for these families. This procedure was to be followed throughout the duration of the war.<sup>40</sup>

Not only did soldiers have to be paid and their families cared for, but they had to have supplies in order to fight. In 1779 Middleborough, making note of this need, provided for "half of the town's powder to be made into cartridges to supply each captain and his men."<sup>41</sup> In May of 1778 the town established a committee to see that clothing was provided for its troops. The town meeting later voted to accept the committee recommendation of prices for various articles of clothing and to pay for the needed articles.<sup>42</sup>

By 1780 food was desperately needed by the Continental armies and the Massachusetts General Court asked the town of Middleborough to raise 50,000 pounds of beef, or the money to pay for it. The town answered the order by claiming that it was impossible at the time to do either since it had

not long before sent an almost equal amount of beef, and that crops were bad, and money was hard to come by with so many of the men serving with the army.<sup>43</sup> In that same year the town voted to supply twelve horses for use with the army.<sup>44</sup> In 1781 the town finally voted to raise and pay for their share of the beef.<sup>45</sup> However they voted to pay \$75,000 in paper money.

While Middleborough was supplying men and goods for the army it was not remaining inactive in other areas of importance, especially in the principal areas of political action in Massachusetts. During the years 1778 through 1780, the town concerned itself with attempts to write a constitution. In August of 1779 Middleborough had sent two delegates to the state constitutional convention, and after receiving the report given by William Shaw and John Miller in May of 1780 the town voted not to accept the proposed constitution as it was then written. The town requested that the constitution be amended so that the governor's power to call up troops would require the consent of the legislature.<sup>46</sup> Middleborough was not alone in its objection to the new constitution and when other towns complained of too much authority in the executive branch of government, the constitution was amended to their satisfaction. Middleborough then accepted the Constitution and gave their vote to it and to John Hancock as the first governor.<sup>47</sup>

Only two more actions of the town of Middleborough are of interest to those interested in its revolutionary history. In January of 1781 any man willing to enlist for three years of service is offered one hundred silver dollars per year.<sup>48</sup> Later in the same year any captain raising his quota of men was to be exempt from paying property taxes in that year. The same exemption was voted to anyone providing clothing or money for clothing to the troops.<sup>49</sup>

Thus the war was fought and won with the Town of Middleborough showing as much zeal for the cause as most, and more than many, toward the establishment of the new American Republic.

*Note: The foregoing thesis was written in the spring of 1971 in a course on the American Revolution for graduate students at Bridgewater State College.*

#### FOOTNOTES

1. **Town of Middleborough Reports**, 1752-1772; P228.
2. *Ibid.* P. 244
3. *Ibid.* P. 259
4. **The Middleborough Antiquarian**; Middleborough Historical Association, Inc.; Vol IV, no. 4; P. 2; Nov. 1964.
5. **Town Reports**; 1772-1788; P. 33
6. **Town of Middleborough Reports**; 1772-1778; pp 36-37.
7. *Ibid.* p. 39.
8. Weston, Thomas: **History of the Town of Middleborough, Massachusetts**; The Riverside Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1906: P. 114.
9. *Ibid.* p. 122
10. *Ibid.* p. 123
11. *Ibid.* p. 124
12. **Town of Middleborough Reports** p. 46.
13. *Ibid.* p. 46
14. *Ibid.* p. 46.
15. **Op. Cit.** Weston; p. 145.
16. See events for year 1778
17. *Ibid.* pp. 122-123.
18. **Town of Middleborough Reports**, 1772-1788; p. 55.

19. *Ibid.* p. 61.
20. **Op. Cit.** Weston; p. 131.
21. Hurd, Hamilton; **History of Plymouth County**; J.W. Lewis & Co.; Philadelphia; 1884; p. 1003.
22. **Op. Cit.** Weston; p. 131
23. *Ibid.* P. xxiii.
24. *Ibid.* P. 139.
25. **Middleborough Antiquarian**; Middleborough Historical Association; Vol. XI; No. 1: Sept, 1969; p. 3.
26. **Op. Cit.** Weston; p. 344.
26. *Ibid.* p. 345.
27. **Op. Cit. Middleborough Antiquarian**, Vol. VI: no. 1:: Feb., 1964: Swift: p. 2.
28. *Ibid.* p. 2.
29. **Op. Cit.** Weston; p. 147.
30. **Town of Middleborough Reports**; 1772-1788; pp. 105-106.
32. *Ibid.* p. 58.
33. *Ibid.* p. 89.
34. *Ibid.* p. 131.
35. *Ibid.* p. 131.
36. *Ibid.* p. 151.
37. *Ibid.* p. 63.
38. *Ibid.* p. 82.
40. *Ibid.* p. 82.
41. *Ibid.* p. 78.
42. *Ibid.* p. 78.
43. *Ibid.* p. 78.
44. *Ibid.* p. 149.
45. *Ibid.* p. 170.
46. *Ibid.* p. 129.
47. *Ibid.* p. 170.
48. *Ibid.* p. 148.
49. *Ibid.* pp. 175 & 178.

## RANDOM OBSERVATIONS

by William Archives

There are several Indian words that the white man has appropriated for his use in Middleboro. The most common, perhaps is the word "Nemasket"; this means "place of the fish" and is the name of the tribe of Indians located here when the Pilgrims reached Plymouth in 1620. Nemasket also referred to a village that was located at what is now called Muttock. "Muttock" was taken from the name of one of the last of the Nemaskets, Chesemuttock, and means a "swift river running between hills." The Nemaskets were a part of the Pohanocket race whose name comes from a famous chief and means "big shoulders."

The name Tispaquin means "big dark feather or black plume." Chief Tispaquin, called in history the "black Sachem" because of his support of Philip in the King Philip War, was a very capable man, so history records, and was married to one of Philip's daughters, Mione. His chief interest in the war, it is said, was a desire to get back the lands in what is now Middleboro, that he had sold. He apparently was the epitome of an "Indian-giver."

The Indian word "Assawompsett" means "place of the white stones" and the name, "Assawompsett Pond" refers either to the White Banks or to white stones on the shore. There are few white stones on the shore today although there may have been in the past as the freezing in the winter changes the shore line. Some of the shore is a sandy beach in the summer.

The meaning of "Ticut" is "the principal river" and refers to the Taunton River which is the main drainage canal for the area. Many smaller streams and brooks feed into this larger river which empties in the ocean at Fall River.





## THE EDDY HOMESTEAD EDDYVILLE

**EDDYVILLE—1661 - 1969**

by G. WARD STETSON

Middleboro, in common with other towns in the Old Colony, can boast of men in the nation's formative years who contributed greatly to the growth of America by their industrious, pioneering spirit. Various sections of town are still known by the names of these early settlers. This is true of the section in East Middleboro known as Eddyville.

Among the passengers in the "Handmaid" that landed in Plymouth on October 29, 1630 were John and Samuel Eddy. John, thirty-three years of age and brother Samuel, twelve years younger, were sons of William Eddy, the Vicar of St. Dunstons, Cranbrook, England, from 1591 to 1616. John settled in Watertown, Mass., becoming the first Town Clerk and a member of the Board of Selectmen.

Samuel settled in Plymouth. He was admitted as a Freeman in 1633 when but three hundred people were there. Records indicate that he built a home on what is now Market Street in the center of town. Later with a growing family, he built a second house in the Hobb's Hole section. In England he had been apprenticed to the tailors trade, which bears out records of clothing he made for soldiers in Plymouth's early battles with Indians.

His marriage to Elizabeth Savery resulted in the birth of

five children. She must have been of a decidedly independent nature as twice she was recorded in a court of law. The first offense was for "wringing and hanging out clothes on the Lords Day in time of publicke exercise." Her second grievous (?) crime was that she "walked from Plymouth to Boston on the Lords Day" — even though it was an errand of mercy to aid an ailing friend.

Soon Samuel evinced a leaning toward purchase and sale of property. There is an interesting entry of ownership of "four shares with Josiah Pratt and Thom Atkinson in the black heiffer which was Henry Howlandes." He bought property in Swansea and is recorded as a founder of the town.

Of primary interest to Middleboro is the knowledge that he is listed as one of the first purchasers of land from the Indians. This was the so-called Twenty-Six Men's Purchase in 1661. His share consisted of several hundred acres in the easterly section of Middleboro and a portion of what is now Halifax. At this juncture it might be well to include that in 1930 the Eddy Family Association (org. 1920) dedicated a Memorial Tablet in Brewster Park, near Pilgrim Spring, Plymouth to John and Samuel Eddy.

As one of the first purchasers he joins the illustrious com-

pany of Pilgrims, — Francis Cook, John Howland, George Soule and possibly John Alden. Other purchasers, — Brewster, Mullins, Billington, White and Brown smack strongly of the Mayflower also.

Of course all religious, civil and social life in early Middleboro centered around the First Church at The Green with Rev. Samuel Fuller, son of Pilgrim Dr. Fuller, its first minister. The first of four church structures was located on the left side of Plymouth Street about a mile from the Green, opposite the present home of Roger Parent. Eddy families were active in this church from earliest days.

With the passage of time, Samuel deeded his large Middleboro holdings to sons Obadiah and Zachariah, saving a small portion for his own use. Zachariah, eight years later, disposed of his half and moved to Swansea with brother Caleb. The father's stay in Middleboro had been brief before moving to Swansea, where he was buried in 1687.

Obadiah thus became the first Eddy to establish permanent residence in town. His home was in that part of Middleboro (now Halifax) near the Winnetuxet River about two miles from the home of Lieut. John Tomson—commander of Middleboro's Fort that stood in the rear of the present High School. It was Lieut. Tomson who ordered Isaac Howland to shoot the Indian across the river on Indian Hill during King Phillip's War.

Obadiah fled with his family to the Fort at that time and later to the safety of Plymouth, remaining there until the close of the war. His home was burned with all others in Middleboro during that terrible war. However, he was among the first to return and rebuild near the site of his first house. He's listed as a soldier in the fort, as a Freeman in 1683 and as a Selectman and Constable. He was chosen as one of the Jurors to lay out a road between Middleboro, Bridgewater and Boston in 1683. Obadiah died in 1722, aged seventy-seven, leaving seven children.

One son, John, records hoeing in his father's corn field with his musket by his side. He looked up to see a hostile Indian in the distance drawing a bead on him. Hastily dropping the hoe to grab and aim his musket, he fired at the same instant the Indian discharged his piece. The Indian dropped dead as his bullet knocked the hammer from Eddy's gun.

With Obadiah's passing the large Eddy acreage was deeded to his second son, another Samuel, a sergeant in the military company and a wheelwright. He married Militiah Pratt of Plymouth. She was born in the Fort during King Phillip's War in 1676. Late in life she used to say, "I can remember when the Indians outnumbered us here ten to one."

This Samuel's first home stood on a knoll north of the present Eddy Homestead. When it burned he rebuilt on the site of the present Homestead in the year 1721. He lived on this farm from 1706 until his death in 1752. The house was moved across Plympton Street in 1803 by Capt. Joshua Eddy when he built the Homestead for son Atty. Zachariah Eddy. The Samuel Eddy home, though much altered, is now lived in by Mr. Russell Porter.

In the year 1742 Samuel deeded the property to his son Zachariah, a farmer. Zachariah was an ardent Whig. Stories of his tilts with Tory Judge Peter Oliver have been handed down by the family through the years. Zachariah's death by smallpox is readily known — he being one of nine, including Rev. Sylvanus Conant, who died in 1777 of the dread disease in the "pest house" on Soule Street. His gravestone in the smallpox cemetery there records the loss of a twenty-five year old soldier son of the same name, in the same year, who died "in the defense of his country." He and his wife Mercy Morton had twelve children, eight of whom were sons.

The eldest son John printed one of the first Almanacs in America prior to 1759. He operated a printing shop in Eddyville. When but twenty-four years old he was killed at Crown Point, New York, in the French and Indian War. Four other sons of Zachariah and Mercy served in the Revolutionary War, including Captain Joshua Eddy.

We are particularly interested in Captain Joshua. His house stands on the corner of Cedar Street opposite the Eddy Homestead. The first home burned in 1820, but he soon rebuilt and lived in the present house until his death on May 11, 1833. His wife was Lydia Paddock a descendant of Elder John Faunce the Pilgrim. The Elder Faunce chair was obtained in Plymouth by son Attorney Zachariah for his mother. It was kept by her in this house for many years, until she gave it to her son Morton of Fall River. Morton was the last of Captain Joshua's sons to be living in 1888. Another chair, one that Governor Hancock sat in as he reviewed the Continental troops on Middleboro Green, was cherished for many years in this house by Miss Anna Cady Eddy.

The writer is the proud owner of Captain Joshua Eddy's account books. For some strange and mysterious reason they were found hidden beside the chimney of the Captain's home. Included in the records are his accounts with James Otis, the fiery orator of Faneuil Hall, with Robert Treat Paine, signer of the Declaration of Independence, and Gen. Nathaniel Goodwin of Plymouth. He was the "Cap'n Goodwin" whose name appears in one of the many verses of Yankee Doodle.

Cherished also, is the sword carried by the writer's great-great-grandfather as a staff officer under General Washington at the Battle of Monmouth. After training a company of Middleboro men on The Green, he led them into New York state, participating in several battles and taking part in the surrender of Burgoyne. At Monmouth Capt. Eddy was standing near Gen. Washington and heard him reprimand Gen. Charles Lee severely for disobeying orders saying, "Had you taken that position with your command as I directed, we would have captured the whole British Army."

Following the Revolution, Joshua continued active participation in the affairs of the First Church at The Green, serving as a Deacon for many years. He became eminently successful in several fields of business endeavor. While operating a large furnace on Whetstone Brook in the Waterville section, he also held part ownership in furnaces in Plympton and Carver. At one time Joshua built a vessel on the Taunton River at Woodward's Bridge, at the same time conducting his



large farm, operating a saw mill, a furnace and a store. In some extraordinary manner he was able to build a sizeable fortune for that day. In spite of his tremendous business activities he also successfully raised nine outstanding children.

In this way Captain Eddy emulated his father also, by having a large family, including seven sons all over six feet tall. A well-founded legend has it that as each son considered marriage, Joshua offered to build him a house and give him a hundred acres of land. However, he stipulated that the house be near his parents. Five of the seven sons did settle in Eddyville, reasonably accounting for the present village. These men continued operation of their father's enterprises for many years. The village prospered to the point where it supported stores, a Post Office, and nearby railroad station.

Refreshing and tremendously interesting are stories told and retold by descendants of early Eddys — choice tidbits gleaned during summer visits and vacations to the village of their forebears. One such story concerned Joshua's two daughters who married and lived in Berkley. Jane became Mrs. Asahel Hathaway. Lydia married Deacon Barzillai Crane. These good ladies became embroiled in an argument of considerable magnitude. Mr. Fuller, the owner of the general store in Berkley, was an Eddy. The public school teacher was also an Eddy from Middleboro. On occasion he corrected his pupils in pronunciation of the words *chaise*, stating it should be pronounced "shaz" instead of "shay", as was the custom. This earth-shaking statement was carried home by the children, touching off an intense discussion and furor in the village.

In due time the matter was brought to the attention of Parson Andros for a decision. He sided with the parents that it always had been and would remain "shay". This decision resulted in a division within the church and the whole community — some siding with Parson Andros, others supporting Deacon Crane and the Eddy group. Harsh words filled the village. One drastic event followed another, resulting in the excommunication of Deacon Crane. Mr. Fuller was forced out of business and moved to Vermont. And as a climax, the Eddy schoolmaster's bright dreams of educational success in Berkley were dashed. He lost his job!

As previously related, in 1803 Captain Joshua built a home for his son Atty. Zachariah Eddy across the street. This is the beautiful house that in 1960 the Eddy Family Association at its Annual Meeting in Plymouth, voted to acquire and maintain as an historic Eddy Homestead. It is dear to the hearts of Eddys in over forty states and in several foreign countries. With the transfer of ownership to the Eddy Homestead Association the property will continue to remain in Eddy family hands as it has since Indian days.

Atty. Zachariah Eddy was one of the foremost lawyers of his day. A warm friend of Daniel Webster, Atty. Eddy tried many cases for and with the famous orator. Perhaps the author of the 1881 Eddy genealogy best sums up the feeling generally accepted concerning Zachariah: "He was probably the most distinguished citizen of Middleboro, who by his natural gifts and acquirements contributed so much to the honor and fair name of Eddyville. In the whole ancestral line there is no one who has attained greater distinction for learn-

ing and high moral and Christian worth. Of studious habits and capacious memory he mastered many branches of knowledge and was equally at home in law, literature, theology and government."

The Eddy Law Office stood for many years a few yards east of the Homestead on Plympton Street. Some years ago it was given to the Springfield Exposition and may be seen today as a unit in the village of Storowtown. Active too in the work of the First Church, he wrote much concerning the early life of the church and his own ancestry. Being very independent of spirit a little story has it that when worshipping by song, if unfortunately interrupted by a sneeze or cough, Zachariah would not try to catch up with the choir but would resume the verse exactly where he had been forced to stop, and so finish the hymn all by himself.

The Homestead passed from Zachariah to his daughter Charlotte, wife of Rev. Francis Pratt and they resided here after his retirement from the ministry. At the time of her death in 1903 the property came to Gen. Samuel Breck. The General served with distinction in the Civil War and descended from Capt. Joshua on both mother's and father's side, consequently having a tremendous knowledge of the genealogy of his family.

The property was then left to his son and wife Dr. & Mrs. Samuel Breck of Boston. They spent summers and vacations in Eddyville, taking an active and ardent interest in the home and its background. In 1926, Mrs. Louisa Eddy Breck and her children became the owners. She was a most gracious lady and charming hostess, tracing her line to Capt. Joshua through his son Ebenezer, so that her son President George W. Breck of the Eddy Family Association has three lines back to Captain Joshua Eddy. It was through the wishes of Mrs. Louisa Eddy Breck that the Eddy Homestead Association became a reality.

Because of the sustained interest in the growing Eddy family and its origin in Middleboro, the Eddy Family Association in 1934 dedicated a memorial plaque on Eddyville Green to Obadiah Eddy and his descendants. The bronze tablet listed the men who served our nation in the early years for freedom. It may be of local interest that Selectman George W. Stetson, then four years old, with Anne Howe Eddy of the same age, unveiled the memorial on that occasion. Recently thieves forcibly removed this plaque, which for thirty-four years had reminded visitors of Eddy men who fought and died for the establishment of a free nation. For the few stolen dollars that the bronze might yield, they flaunted all respect for the sacrifices of patriotic, law abiding, hardworking pioneers.

Not wanting to leave the impression that all Eddys are faultless, we close with a verse written years ago by Dr. Merritt Henry Eddy when eighty-seven years old and who lived beyond the century mark: "If you could see your ancestors all standing in a row, there might be some of them you wouldn't care to know. But here's another question which requires a different view: If you could meet your ancestors, would they be proud of you?"



### THE "SMALL OLIVER HOUSE"

It will be noticed the house in the above illustration is referred to as the "Small" Oliver House. The Great House was "Oliver Hall," a mansion built by Judge Peter Oliver for his own residence on the brow of Muttok Hill, overlooking the Nemasket River. Oliver Hall was one of the finest country residences this side of Boston. A detailed description is given in the first volume of the "History of Middleboro" by Thomas Weston. When Judge Oliver, because of his loyalty to King George III, was banished from Massachusetts, Oliver Hall was burned to the ground by irate patriots on November 4, 1778.

The "Small Oliver House" was built by Judge Oliver for his son, Dr. Peter Oliver, who married Sally Hutchinson, daughter of Massachusetts Governor Hutchinson. The house was built in 1769; thus, in 1969 when Middleboro celebrated the 300th anniversary of the incorporation of the town, the Oliver house was celebrating its 200th birthday.

Dr. Oliver occupied the house for a few years, after which it was purchased by Judge Thomas Weston who made it his home for nearly forty years. Subsequently, the property was owned and occupied by members of the Sproat family, and later by that of Henry Champion Jones of Boston. In 1945 it came into the possession of another Peter Oliver, descendant of Judge Oliver, whose widow occupies the house intermittently throughout the year. Mr. and Mrs. Oliver restored the house and grounds as nearly as possible to their original design and decoration.

In November, 1947, Mr. and Mrs. Oliver invited the Middleborough Historical Association to hold a meeting in the beautifully restored mansion. On this occasion, Mr. Oliver read the following paper which he had written. We are indebted to Mrs. Oliver for a copy of this history of the Small Oliver House.



**JUDGE OLIVER  
and the  
Small Oliver House in Middleborough**

The small Oliver house in Middleborough was built in 1769 by Judge Peter Oliver of the Superior Court of Judicature for his son Dr. Peter Oliver who, on the first of February, 1770, was to marry Sally, the eldest daughter of Thomas Hutchinson, then Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Massachusetts Bay, and shortly to be Governor.

Presumably the building of the house began toward the middle of the year. When we had to replace the sills a few years ago, we found, face up, near the center of the front door, upon the sill, a brand new (or what looked as though it had been brand new when it was put there) penny with the date 1769. It seems reasonable that this must have taken some time to get to the colony from England, so we deduce the spring or summer as the time the house was started. Scratched into the cement of the foundations of the right-hand chimney is the date 1769; and we found it again, under about six layers of wallpaper, in the "best" bedroom closet. Despite the fact that there are a number of references to it as having been built in 1762, and the fact that there have in the past been postcards of it, printed hereabouts, with that date (one of these postcards even adds that the house was seized by the British during the Revolution!), there is no question about when it was built, or under what circumstances. Unfortunately not very much more is known.

It is almost exactly the same in its dimensions as the Wythe house in Williamsburg; windows and fireplaces downstairs and up are the same. The halls resemble each other, the stairs and bannisters are alike, though these turn to the left and those in the Wythe house to the right. In this house the stairs rise from close to the front door, which leaves a larger space in the back than in the front of the downstairs hall. In the Wythe house this is reversed. Here, at the head of the stairs and in the center of the house, a partition makes a small back hall off which open four rooms, two good-sized ones on the sides and two small ones in the middle. The Wythe house does not have the wall setting off the back hall, nor does it have the two very small bedrooms; and in this house it seems as though the present division in the center upstairs was not part of the original plan.

Judge Oliver, who built this house for his son, was the youngest son of Daniel Oliver, merchant of Boston, one-time member of Her Majesty's Council, and his wife Elizabeth Belcher Oliver. He was born in 1713, was graduated from Harvard in 1730, and married, in 1733, Mary, the daughter of William Clark of Boston, for several years a member of the General Court. In 1744 he left Boston for Middleborough, attracted, perhaps, as Weston's history of the town says, by the beauty of the place, and probably also by the attention it had received as a result of a petition of the remaining Indians living here at Muttuck, as this part was called, that they be allowed to move farther down river in the direction of Titicut. Conceivably his interest may have been turned a little in this direction by the fact that his grandfather, Captain Peter Oliver, had at one time owned a part of Naushon Island. He purchased first about three hundred acres, including the dam then recently authorized by the town, and the water privilege, and gradually acquired more land. Here he spent the next thirty years of his life.

The extent to which he developed the property is a little hard to discover at the distance of two centuries. A forge was erected on the dam, there was a slitting mill, and an iron furnace known as Oliver's Furnace. There is a story which has been often told about the slitting mill, how at the time the Judge acquired his property here there was only one such mill in this part of the country, and that near Milton. No one is supposed then to have known the method of its operations and the Judge is reported to have offered a substantial sum of money to one Hushai Thomas, a skillful young man of the town, if he would build him a mill to produce nail rods as good as those made in Milton. Mr. Thomas is said to have disappeared from the town inexplicably, and it was observed that his wife and family evinced no fears as to his whereabouts. There is not much detail in the versions of the story, but about the time Thomas disappeared from Middleborough an unkempt and apparently partly demented fellow turned up in Milton, and through friendship with town children gained access to the works. Eventually Thomas came back. The foundations of the slitting mill were laid and the product, when finally operations began, equalled that of any other part of the country. It is said that from this point the situation of the Thomas family showed a marked improvement.

There are a few letters of Judge Oliver's left which show him to have taken an active part in the operation of his property. One in 1756 to the "Hon'ble Committee of War about two howitzers just ordered," reads in part:

... Had I known of your having occasion for them ten days ago, I could have supplied you, but I finished my Blast three or four days since . . . I have been to a great deal of trouble and Charge to secure Mountain ore to make warlike stores . . . for guns and mortars . . .

He writes of being sensible of the "Risque of making guns and mortars from Bog ore, (so) that I shall not attempt them again with that." In another letter he speaks of "granadoe" shells, and of having "lent Mr. Barker my Pattern for Mortars," and of having sent "vessel after vessel" for material for another furnace which would have made possible much speedier supply to New York of "Stores of such consequence."

The files in London of the proceedings of the Commissioners of American Claims throw some light on the extent of his interests here. He was dispossessed, he wrote, "of an estate real and personal which was competent to the support with decency of his large family."

He describes his private business as having been of a very lucrative nature. The schedule of his estate, which he held eventually in fee simple with his son Peter Oliver, Junior, lists the large forge, 70 feet long and 50 feet wide, "almost new" (the date of this communication is March 11, 1784, and presumably refers to a situation of about ten years earlier); the slitting mill to which they had an exclusive right in New England by Act of Parliament; a saw mill, grist mill, boulding mill, and cider mill; an anchor shop, blacksmith shop, and "machine for weighing carts and their ladings." There was a barn 90 feet long and 40 feet wide for charcoal; there were three hundred and fifty acres of woodland, with two miles of the aforesaid works, worth "twenty shillings per acre"; and one hundred acres of improved land adjoining. There were five dwelling houses, barns, threshing house, and orchard.

These were what pertained to the business that he had developed and not to the property adjoining his iron works where stood his "large dwelling house, stables and outhouses, garden and orchard," and another "good dwelling house," the whole fenced in with stone walls. He listed separately his land in other parts of the Province, and his interest in a dock called Oliver's Dock in Boston which today is known as Rowe's Wharf.

In a letter from Birmingham in 1787 he says "that most of the iron works in the province were upon a small scale, and generally were owned by a number of proprietors "who supplied them from their own labor and from a swamp ore of little cost. Here, perhaps, he is remembering his experience of thirty-one years earlier of the "Risque of making guns . . . from Bog ore." Most of these operations were winter works and were built on small streams often exhausted by summer droughts. "On the contrary," he writes, "my stream (this is the Nemasket which flows beside us) was supplied from five ponds, the lower one was always reputed nine miles round; the next ten miles long, two others, each four or five miles, and one of about three miles round, all of which could supply me with a constant flow of water. I have often had eight wheels going at the same time, on one dam, and waste water for eight wheels more . . ."

He writes that his works "were also situated so as to reduce my land carriage of ten miles, to water carriage to New York, from whence I furnished myself with pig iron." Several months in the year he could convey his pig iron to within a few yards of his forge by water. He mentions also that he was but fifteen miles land carriage to whence he could convey his goods to Boston by water.

All of this was built up out of his thirty years in Middleborough, but most of the work must have been done before his appointment to the Superior Court in 1756. Even from 1744 he was continuously employed in the service of the Crown, and of the Province as Commissioner of the Peace, Judge of the Inferior Court, of the Quorum, of the Superior Court, as member of his Majesty's Council, and as Justice of the Peace throughout the entire province. During the years he served on the Superior Court he said he traveled 1,100, 1,200 and even 1,500 miles per year to attend the business of thirteen counties.

It may properly be noted that for none of these services had he received any compensation in the form of salary until His Majesty granted him a salary in 1772 as Chief Justice. Even this he did not accept until one of his fellow justices, Judge Trowbridge, was persuaded to refuse a salary as justice from the Crown and accept it only as from the General Court. At this Judge Oliver accepted the offer from the King.

This salary was the bribe for accepting which he was impeached. In 1774, banished, his return forbidden under pain of death, his property confiscated, he sailed for England. It was the end of March when "about 70 sail" set out from Nantasket for Halifax. "Here," he wrote in his diary, "I took my leave of that once happy country where peace and plenty reigned uncontrolled, till that infernal Hydra Rebellion, with its hundred heads had devoured its happiness, spread desolation over its fields, and ravaged the peaceful mansions of its inhabitants . . . Here I bid Adieu to that shore which I never wish to tread again till that greatest of social blessings, a firm,

established British Government, precedes or accompanies me thither." He and his son Peter Junior, of this house, were the fourth and fifth generations of the family to have lived in this country. He never returned, nor did any of his descendants, nor any of the Hutchinsons who sailed with them. Mary Sanford Oliver of St. John's, New Brunswick, in 1851 wrote to her cousin, my grandfather, Andrew Oliver, in Boston, "I have often heard my mother speak of the shipload of Olivers and Hutchinsons who at the time of the Revolution went to England calling themselves "sturdy beggars."

The last years of the Chief Justice's life were passed in England. He compiled and published a Scripture Lexicon which went through several editions, and which was for a time used as a textbook at Oxford. Shortly after his return Oxford gave him the honorary degree of D.C.L. Hutchinson received the same degree at the same time, and is said to have valued it more than any honor bestowed upon him. The event is described in his diary. "After putting on the Doctor's scarlet gowns, and bands, and caps, (we) were introduced into the Theatre . . . presented separately to the Vice-Chancellor who conferred the degrees of Doctor, In Jure, Civile, Honoris Causa." (This was the degree that only recently before had been given to Dr. Johnson, and in our time to Mr. Winston Churchill.) The judge also describes the scene, with the two thousand spectators, "the ladies by themselves in brilliant order . . . the theatre a most noble building . . . the accompaniment of music, orchestral and vocal."

The happiest years of the Judge's life were surely spent here in Middleborough, particularly here, just across the river, on the westernmost of the two Muttok Hills where he lived. This had been the meeting place of the Indians, and when the first settlers ventured west from Plymouth to meet Massasoit, it was probably here that the meeting occurred.

But the Europeans had known a little of this country for a long time before then. In 1524 Verrazzano the Florentine was somewhere in Buzzards Bay for fifteen days and noted the goodly stature and shape of "two kings" that he met. Martin Pring was along the coast in 1603, and after him Captain Weymouth and Bartholomew Gosnold; Hunt was left here in 1614 by Captain John Smith. Demier, or Dermier, who was here in 1618, rescued the nameless French sailor who had been wrecked on the coast three years before. Demier ventured inland, a one day's journey to the westward Nemasket. "Here," he recorded, "I redeemed a Frenchman."

Nemasket, the name of the river, means, in the Indian language, the place of fish; Assawampsett, the pond to the southward from which the river rises, means the place of white stones; Titicut, downstream a few miles, the place whither in 1737 the Indians petitioned to be allowed to move, means the place of the great river. It is at Titicut that the Nemasket joins the Taunton River, and an account of the Indians in the *Middleborough Gazette* for September 10, 1859, says that John Eliot, in his Bible for the Indians, translated Euphrates as Titicut. This is the sort of reference that the casual historian is reluctant to check lest it turn out not to be true.

The Indians that lived here, the Wampanoags, cast their lines in pleasant places. The meeting place of the sachems on the Muttok hill is one of the few places in this part of the country where there is a view. From there, on a fine day, one



can see the salt water at Plymouth, and the country opens away wide and handsome to the northeast. The country here abounds in ponds and lakes, and there are numerous springs of sweet water and good hunting and good fishing. The herring played an important part in the life of the community. The Indians ate the fish in a number of different ways as they caught them, and they also smoked and dried them for a ready supply in the fall and winter.

The rights to take the fish (the ones that run here are alewives) have always been jealously guarded by the towns. The objection against damming the river here came from fear as to what it would do to the run of herring. In some places fish ladders were built over the dams. No subject in the Commonwealth has given rise to more enactments than that relating to the taking of the herring. In the early days each person in the town, for a slight fee, was allowed 200 fish. Widows and spinsters were supplied by the town. In 1706 the price was six pence a load, first come first served. In 1725 it was agreed that 8,000 fish should be accounted a load and that each man that had had no fish the year before should have them first, "provided they have their cart ready at the weir, and not else." They were used mostly for fertilizer—the Indians taught them this—and the rule was one fish to one hill of corn. From this came the expression still heard occasionally of referring to a field as "all herring'd out."

In recent years they have not come regularly, due perhaps to the pollution of the water that seems to come with progress. But last year and this year in April they ran again. Just below the dam here by the road the water was black with them; it gave the impression that one could walk across the top of them. Children reached in and pulled them out. They struggled so furiously up that from time to time they would jump themselves out of the water and onto the banks, where they were low, to the satisfaction of a flock of herring gulls that wheeled incessantly overhead all the time the fish were here. And I watched them last year, when they came to the dam, not jump it but swim up it! This sounds incredible and must be seen to be believed.

Seven Indian trails met here in the lands of the Nemaskets in Middleborough. These are mentioned in early deeds and in many cases became boundary lines; the one from Plymouth passed in front of where this house is and became the public highway; it is the Plymouth Street of today. Mourt's *Relation* describes it as seen by Bradford and Miles Standish on their second adventure, November 30. "The next morning we followed certain beaten paths and tracks of the Indians into the woods. After a while we came upon a very broad beaten path well nigh ten feet broad."

The early settlers as they came a little to the west here were struck by the resemblance of some of this land by the river to park land in parts of England; here it had all been burnt over so that only the tall trees remained. They were surprised by the extensive cultivation. They were only a few years after the great plague which had wiped out so many of the Indians in 1617 or 1619, and they noticed that "here have been many towns . . . the ground is very good on both sides (of the river) . . . A pity it was to see so many goodly fields and so well seated without the men to dress and manure them . . . upon this river dwelleth Massassoit.

Hopkins and Winslow in the summer of 1621 were welcomed by the Indian and given an abundant repast of the spawn of shad and of a kind of bread called maizum and of boiled musty acorns. They found the Indians fishing on a weir; probably where the river widens just across Plymouth Street from here. Their first night they spent with Massassoit; on his bed, in fact, a wooden platform about a foot off the ground, of which the two whites had half and Massassoit and his wife the other half. This was probably across the river on the Muttock hill or a little farther to the east on what is called now Fort Hill, where one of the town high schools stands. They recorded that they found the Indian custom of singing themselves to sleep not conducive to slumber in their case.

The next evening they returned to the weir where the Indians had been fishing. "It pleased God to give them a good store of fish so we were well refreshed when we went to bed."

In 1660 Massasoit died of the plague and left two sons, Wamsutta and Pometican. Hubbard says of Wamsutta, who was also called Alexander, "that he had neither affection to the persons, nor to the religion, of the whites." He plotted against the English, and on an expedition to Marshfield to treat with them he fell sick in Winslow's house, was taken to Governor Bradford's in Plymouth and then, continuing sick, carried to his people "to their wading place at Nemasket." This is about a mile upstream from here. There they embarked in canoes but he died before he reached home.

His brother Pometican became Sachem, and war between the Indians and the whites began and spread throughout this part of Massachusetts and into Rhode Island. It ended with the death of Pometican, shot and then beheaded. He, like his brother, Wamsutta, had changed his name and the war is called after him, King Philip's War.

This was the beginning of the decline of the Indians, unless, indeed, the date be put farther back to the arrival of Verazzano or perhaps even that of Columbus to the south. Here in Middleborough, by 1793, there were but eight families, poor, improvident, and intemperate; and in 1831 the last of them, Ben Simonds, said to have been a Revolutionary soldier, was buried by the side of Assawampsett Pond in Lakeville. There is a small monument to his memory, still there. Recently his remains are said to have been dug up and taken to Harvard. This may not be so, but it seems unpleasantly likely.

The oldest burial place of the Indians was on the hill across from what was the site of Oliver Hall. Today there is not much trace left of the Indian graves, and there is almost none of Oliver Hall.

About twenty acres of the land that Judge Oliver acquired when he came here in 1744 he enclosed after the manner of an English park. The driveway came in to the eastward on the north side of the hill, and led through an orchard; then dividing, one part toward the river, the other to the south, came round through gardens to the front of the Hall.

There are, so far as I know, no contemporary plans or drawings either of the property or the house, and Thomas Weston's sketch of the life of the Chief Justice, his history of the towns, occasional letters and articles in the *Nemasket Gazette*, later the *Middleborough Gazette*, and certain of the files of the claims of the loyalists which are unpublished but available in London, these are the sources of most of the information here.



The grounds were planted with shrubs and flowers; John Adams' diary speaks of these. The avenue was lined with ornamental trees. What was called, and what is still called here, Oliver's Walk, made a half circle about the Hall along the edge of the river. In a cleft in the hill to the south of the Hall and halfway between the top and the river there was a spring and spring house which is also referred to as the banqueting house and as the summer pavillion. The spring was used to cool the wine on summer days and a few of the dark green bottles with PO stamped or blown on them still exist. My father has one of them.

In the Judge's diary there is a description of a visit made in England to the country house of Lord Edgecombe, and of a walk there which "filled the mind with pleasure." "But I was in one walk," he writes, "deprived of pleasure for a moment it being so like a serpentine walk of mine on the banks of the river Nemasket . . . (so) that I was snatched from where I now was, to the loss of where I had so late been, in the arms of contentment."

The Hall was built with a steep roof and deep jutting eaves, with walls of white plaster and portico of oak. Its frame is said to have been shipped from England, and the interior decorations, carvings, wainscoting, and hangings made expressly for it in London.

The large hall opened to the east on the river and was wainscoted with English oak. The upper part of it is said have been decorated with hangings of birds and flowers. The ceilings were high. Both Adams and Judge Sewall speak of the pleasure they had in visiting the Hall. Mrs. Norcutt, who was the housekeeper and who lived on here in Middleborough long after the Judge and his family had been banished, wrote, "I remember one day hearing Governor Hutchinson say to Judge Oliver as they were walking in the garden together, 'Judge Oliver, you have here one of the loveliest spots in all his majesty's colony.'"

There are a few little anecdotes about it; that the oaken floor in the big parlor was so polished that on one occasion a maid slipped and spilt tea and cream on the gown of one of the ladies, staining her white satin slipper whereupon the enraged guest from Boston drew off her slipper and spanked her soundly "in a high dudgeon." This does not speak too well for the Boston lady's manners. One night in 1762 there was a notable company gathered when a messenger came riding up the avenue swinging his hat and shouting, "Long live the King! A Prince has been born to the royal house of England." Governor Hutchinson was there that night and his brother-in-law (they had married Margaret and Mary Sanford), Lieutenant Governor Andrew Oliver, who was the Judge's elder brother. This is another recollection of Mrs. Norcutt and she says that Andrew wore a suit of scarlet velvet and short breeches, long white silk stocking with knee and shoe buckles, and that Hutchinson was dressed the same, though his suit was of blue. With this much about the appearance of the family it is perhaps only fair to record the comment in Hawthorne's *American Notes*, on seeing the Oliver portraits in Salem in 1837, to the effect that the clothes of the family are generally better than the faces. And the Governor was not remarkably handsome. He had what, in my family, we call an Oliver nose which inspired the couplet in a Boston paper:

When Hutchinson came the people rose  
To clear a place to land his nose.

The library was separate from the house and connected by a latticed gallery and here were the family portraits. In the Judge's list of things in the house he mentions eight portraits. Some of these may have been the small Smiberts here; there are two others belonging to my two brothers and one of the Judge's mother, as a widow, which my father has. A daughter-in-law who lived on here as a widow after the Revolution and died in 1832 is mentioned in an article in the *Middleborough Gazette* of September 10, 1859, as having had a full-length portrait of the Judge. (She also remembered that he was fond of Pope and of Thomson's *Seasons*.) That may have been in the Hall. The larger portraits by Smibert and Blackburn and the Copley miniatures which my father has belonged not to Peter Oliver, the Judge, but to Lieutenant Governor Andrew, his elder brother, who also owned the portrait of the three brothers of which there is a copy here.

Also in the library, in addition to the books and portraits, was on one side the family coat of arms, and on the other, in loyal Tory style, the bust of King George and the banner of England.

The gayest celebration at the big house was probably the wedding reception for Dr. Peter Oliver, Junior, and his bride Sally. There were guests from town and even from abroad, and they were said to have stayed four days. One lady's hair was so puffed and powdered and rolled high on her head that she is said to have sat up all night so as not to spoil her hairdresser's work. Another slept with her hands tied over her head so that they might be white for the approaching reception.

Considering the dangers and uncertainties of the times it is almost extraordinary that any carefree occasion can have occurred. It was only four years before that Hutchinson's house in Milton had been destroyed by the mob. He had been warned of the danger and when he heard of the approach of the crowd he had the house closed and secured as well as he could and sent his family away to safety, determined to face the mob himself.

At the last moment Sally came back, the Sally who was to come to this house as a bride, and protested that she would not leave while her father stayed. "I could not stand against this," he wrote, and withdrew with her. As they left by the back of the house they heard the axes splitting the doors and voices cry "Damm him, he's upstairs, we'll have him!" Part of the inventory of the contents mentions little details that one hates to associate with violence; of his daughter's "ruffles, and laced fly caps, riding hoods and ribbons, capes and petticoates, gloves and shoes, and muffs and tippets and so on." Afterward the house of Andrew Oliver was destroyed; and when the Lieutenant Governor died the Chief Justice was warned by young Thomas Hutchinson that his life would be endangered if he attended his brother's funeral.

To Mrs. Norcutt again is owed the account of Judge Oliver's last visit to Middleborough, of his ride down from Boston to reach the Hall on the edge of the evening, travel-stained and weary. He entered the house, collected a few valuables from a secret drawer and, bidding farewell to his housekeeper, left, not to return again.

For a few years the Hall stayed as it was, but violence had long been expected and, at last, on the night of November 4, 1778, the cry went up that the Hall was afire. The library



burned first, and the crowd broke in, trying to lay their hands on what they could. Parts of the hangings in the lower hall of the birds and flowers were torn off, and it is said that for years afterwards the women of the town wore pieces of them in their hair as mementos of the days "when George was King and Oliver was Judge."

Mrs. Norcutt made her way into the great parlor and found a piece of money "about the size of a dollar" in the money closet. She kept it, for she said it always reminded her of that last visit of Judge Oliver, and of his looks, so tired and careworn. She tried to save Madam Oliver's rosebush, a present from England which grew over the portico, but she could not; the heat was too intense.

In this small house of Peter and Sally Oliver where they lived for the better part of five years there were some happy occasions, surely at least, when their three children were born, Margaret in 1771, Thomas Hutchinson in 1772, and Peter in 1774. When he was at college Peter had lived with Sally's brother, Elisha, and it was through him that he began to see a good deal of the Hutchinsons. He notes in his diary the first time he met her, and refers later to a very agreeable way in her behavior "which I remember pleased me beyond any other of my female acquaintances" though (he added) "I had not the least thought of any connection with her." After the Hutchinson house was destroyed he went to see the family and found Sally "most terribly worried and distressed." That spring he "had obtained leave of her father" to pay his addresses. He writes that the family were very agreeable and says "I found that courtship was the most pleasant part of my life hereto." He seems to have been fond of dividing his life into periods. There is one bright note in his diary that I have always enjoyed. Apropos of his marriage he wrote, "Here ends the happiest period of my life." I have always hoped that Sally never read this.

He does not seem to have shared the regard toward his native land that his father showed to the end of his life. When in 1814 the Massachusetts Historical Society asked to borrow the only perfect manuscript of Hubbard's *History of New England*, which he had inherited, he is said to have sent a surly refusal.

It should be remembered, in extenuation, that these misfortunes, and in his case they were very real misfortunes, came when he was young; and from his point of view the turnings of the times must have been bitter to watch.

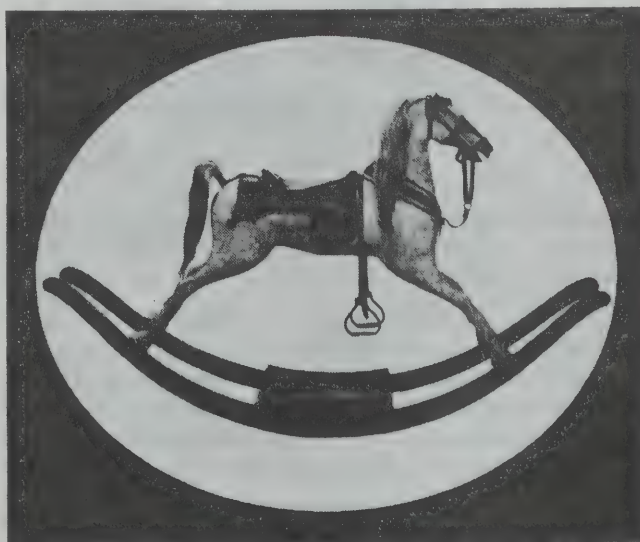
It was shortly after this house was built that the reception was held here for Benjamin Franklin. Very little is known about it, by me, at least; but ever since the yellow room here in the front of the house has been called the Franklin room. It was Franklin who, a few years later, was to make public parts of some private correspondence of the Judge and Governor, letters shown Franklin with the understanding that they not be published. Needless to say, they were published. I have never been able to understand why the Franklin party was held here, rather than in the Hall, since it must have been before the incident of the letters; and I have always hoped that it may have been that the Judge would not have Mr. Franklin in the house at any stage of his career.

I have said a great deal about the members of my family. Let me offer in justification a quotation from Daniel Webster:

"There is a moral and philosophical respect for our ancestors which elevates the character and improves the heart. Next to the sense of religion and moral feeling I hardly know what should bear with stronger obligations on a liberal and enlightened mind than a consciousness of an alliance with excellence which is departed, and a consciousness too, that in its acts and conduct, and even in sentiments and thoughts, it may be actively operating on the happiness of those who come after it."

I am sorry that I have not had more that I could say about this house and the Peter Olivers for whom it was built. The schedule of his personal estate mentions the furnishings in the house, the linen and silver, china and glass, kitchen furniture, wearing apparel, tongs, shovels and andirons, etc. In addition to the small items he listed "an eight day clock, two dining tables, two tea tables, and 14 leather bottomed chairs, all mahogany, 4 plain chairs, 4 looking glasses, a four poster bed, two bureaus, a double chest of drawers all mahogany, six bedsteads, and an easy chair." I did not see this list until after we had refurnished the house and was amused to see that he included also two pictures of the King and Queen. Without knowing, we had replaced these and even added one of the coronation.

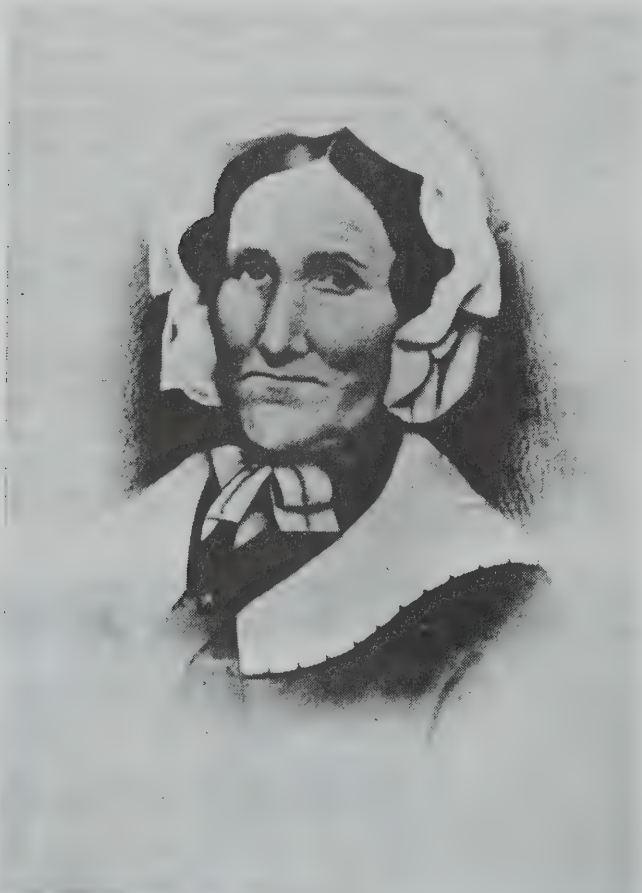
Many of the entries in his diaries are of no particular interest today, and not a few are bitter. "Some of our puppies in town are coming to wait on the Judge," he wrote in June, 1774, and in September again—"Today I was visited by about thirty Middleborough Puppies," and again, he writes of "the consummate impudence" to which he has been subjected. I mention this now in closing only because it gives me a chance to end on a happy note, a headline from the front page of the *Middleborough Gazette* in the middle of November, 1947:



## THE PEMBERTON CHAIR

In the Middleborough Historical Museum, standing before the secretary where visitors register, is a very handsome chair, a country Chippendale, known as "The Pemberton Chair." This chair was presented to the Museum by Dr. Franklin P. Lowry of Newton. It was originally owned by the Scolley Family for whom Scolley Square in Boston was named. William Scolley, Son of John who came to Boston from the Orkney Islands in 1700, was Dr. Franklin's great-great-grandfather.

There were two Rebecca Scolleys — aunt and niece. The niece, pictured here, was born Rebecca Jaycox, daughter of Thomas and Susannah (Scolley) Jaycox. She was adopted by John Scolley and brought to Middleboro in 1744 by her Aunt Rebecca Scolley at the time of the siege of Boston. They stayed at the Dr. Peter Oliver house in the Muttok section of the town. At a ball given there Dr. Joseph Clark met the niece Rebecca, and married her. They lived in a house Dr. Clark built on South Main Street, Middleboro, near the railroad bridge, in later years occupied by the Dorrance family and torn down when Route 25 was constructed.



Dr. Lowry also presented the Museum with a painting by Cephas Thompson of "Grandmother Sproat," Dr. Lowry's grandmother. Lucy Morton Sproat married Amos Pratt. The portrait, painted in 1843, was presented to Granville T. Sproat, later was given to J. R. Sproat, and then to Dr. Lowry.

Grandmother Sproat was born in 1780, died in 1849.

Amos Pratt owned a thread mill in Furnace Village, Easton, Massachusetts, and both he and his wife are buried in an old South Easton cemetery.

The Pemberton chair was given to the aunt, Rebecca, by the Earl of Pemberton who came to Boston from England but, she refused to marry him because he was accustomed to have wine on his table. When he died, he left the chair to Rebecca who in turn left it to her niece Rebecca, wife of Dr. Clark.

Dr. Clark was a surgeon in the Revolutionary War. Their daughter, Lucy, married James Sproat and their daughter, Lucy Morton Sproat, married Amos Pratt. Mrs. Pratt eventually became the owner of the chair and left it to her niece, a great-great-niece of Rebecca Scolley.



"I send you this picture of your Great Grandmother Rebecca Clark. She was born in Edenton, N. C. 1757. At the death of her mother, her father took her and a little sister to Boston (not wanting to have them brought up with slaves) to their Uncle John Scolley's. In 1774 when Boston was evacuated by the British, her Aunt Rebecca Scolley (for whom she was named) took her to Middleboro, where she became acquainted with Dr. Joseph Clark, and was married to him in 1779. She died in Middleboro, 1831. She was daughter of Thomas Jaycox and Susannah Scolley.

This photograph was taken by Copley in Boston when she was seven years old, and copied in Middleboro by George Putnam in 1884."

Lucy M. Pratt.



## THE OLD TRAINING GREEN

GEORGE WARD STETSON

*The author is descended from the first Stetson (Robert) who came to America in 1634 and settled in Scituate, Massachusetts. Robert served as "Cornet of the Troop of Horse" in King Phillip's War. From the "Cornet" down through the Revolution and War of 1812, to his own son who served in the Korean War, Mr. Stetson's forbears were military men. He served in World War II from private to Major in the Militia of Massachusetts. For several years he served in the House of Representatives at the State House in Boston.*

### THE OLD "TRAINING GREEN"

GEORGE WARD STETSON

There is no more beautiful scene in all America than an old New England village nestling peacefully in its lush hills and valleys. This picture has for years beckoned artists and photographers hoping to capture its beauty. The focal point of such a scene would be "the Green" around which are clustered the white pillared colonial church, the town hall, country store and the solidly constructed and imposing homes. Even today in a rapidly changing era, this spot of refuge and charm is often called the old Training Green, Village Green, the Common, the Muster Field or just the Green.

In the earliest days of our colonies "the Training Green" was established through sheer necessity. Because of the common need for a suitable tract of land upon which their militia might train for the defense of their homes, folks willingly conveyed ground for the training of the military company.

Under date of September 1, 1640 in the old Plymouth Colony Law (English Law) it is recorded "that the Inhabitants of every Towne within the Government fitt and able to bear arms be trayned (at least) six tymes in the year." The Colony Court ordered each military company to choose its own officers. These officers chose the field officers, the Majors, Lt. Colonels and Colonels, — who in turn chose the Generals. This system accounts for the many military titles often used by our grandparents. If below strength, a company was commanded by a Lieutenant or Ensign. At the outbreak of King Phillip's War the town of Middleboro, for example, had a company of but sixteen men and the Governor gave John Thompson the commanding officer and Ensign's commission and later a Lieutenant's commission. This old town had but one company for fifty-eight years.

While Massachusetts remained as a colony of England, all military commissions expired at the death of the reigning sovereign, to be renewed upon the ascension to the throne of the new monarch. The towns were divided into military districts, based upon population. Middleboro had four military districts at the outbreak of the Revolution, — hence four companies, each with a Captain and two Lieutenants. These four companies formed a battalion, commanded by a Major.

With the growth of our communities it was necessary to provide sufficient Training Greens, resulting in some towns having four or five, based upon the distribution of population. Since all "able bodied" men formed the militia and many served as officers, it is not difficult to appreciate the power and influence which the military wielded in New England. In a letter to a friend written just prior to his death in 1826 John Adams wrote, "The American States have owed their existence to the militia for two hundred years. Neither school nor town meetings have been more essential to the formation and character of the nation than the militia."

By Act of the Continental Congress on July 18, 1775 it was provided, "that all able bodied effective men between sixteen and fifty in each colony should form themselves into regular companies of militia," — all units subject to the Governor's call. It suggested that one fourth of these should be "Minute Men." The whole state under this law was organized as companies of "Train Band", — while including citizens from fifty to sixty-five under the "Alarm List." Equipment required to be furnished by and for each man, was a good firearm, bayonet, ram rod, cartridge box for fifteen rounds, six flints, one pound of powder, forty leaden bullets, haversack, blanket and canteen to hold one quart.

At the close of the Revolution that great Prussian officer General Baron Von Steuben assisted President George Washington in drawing up a new and nearly perfect militia system that became the basis of our present National Guard program. What schoolboy of bygone days can not recall how Von Steuben whipped the raw troops into a well-knit fighting machine during that terrible winter at Valley Forge.

If the writer may be permitted a personal observation, he would recall that at the outbreak of World War II when in the House of Representatives, he was privileged to serve on the Committee of Military Affairs. While working on the federalization of the National Guard and organization of the State Guard, as a Committee member, he observed how careful both federal and state military men were to refrain from altering the old militia law, — recognizing the perfection which Von Steuben had woven into the statute so many years ago.

With the need for and the growth of the militia, it is not difficult to visualize the part Muster Fields or Training Greens played in the picture. Regular and informal drills were frequently held, but we recall with much pleasure the stories of "Muster Day" and "May Training." On these days the local company or battalion would exhibit their prowess as soldiers, — dressed in gay white and scarlet trimmed uniforms, or the blue and buff of the Revolutionary period, and led by the fife and drum as featured in each company.

The "General Muster" was invariably held in October, usually lasting for two or three days and often held on the Green nearest the home of the Brigadier General commanding, — for this was a Brigade Muster made up of the several regiments from this section of southeastern Massachusetts. As



Training Green, Plympton, Mass.

A portion of the Training Green, showing in the background a boulder bearing a tablet dedicated to Deborah Sampson born in Plympton and famous for her participation in the Revolutionary War.

the troops approached the Training Green, — many coming from far distant points, they sometimes found obstructions placed in their way by youngsters of the town as pranks. Then detachments of “pioneer militia”, — who always preceded a column, would clear the road. These men were dressed as woodsmen but wore the distinctive designation of their military unit. Once all were assembled there was considerable intricate infantry, artillery or cavalry drill by the various units of the Brigade. Drill was followed by sham battles, interspersed with martial music by the combined fife and drum units and it can be well-imagined there was plenty of horse-play on the part of the enlisted men. Food and drink was plentiful, — as the women of the town had been cooking and preparing for the Muster for days. They had also aided their men in “sprucing up” their showy but impractical uniforms. The militiamen themselves had spent much time in polishing their firearms, bayonets and metalwork, as well as shining up all leather goods for the inspection that concluded the Muster and was to be witnessed by high ranking civil and military authorities.

Although with the obvious weaknesses of the system in the very early days of the nation, it nourished and kept active a genuine spirit of patriotism. It also developed some officers and men who, — when stress did come under serious training and actual combat, — became fighting men of whom their fellow citizens had reason to be mighty proud. This was the type of organization which opposed the highly trained British regulars and Royal marines. Obviously the British, tired and bored from long confinement during the voyage across the Atlantic, looked upon an invasion of our shores and contact with the militia in the way of a “lark.” They probably had little fear of, nor respect for, the capabilities of our troops.

A brief picture of the military situation as it existed here in southeastern Massachusetts at the outbreak of the Revolution might be in order at this point. The powerful British fleet was constantly patrolling our shores. Nantucket Island was completely in the hands of the English. The officers apparently had orders not to bring on any general engagement but to continually harass the shore towns, to land foraging parties for food and military necessities and to keep us in a state of concern and uncertainty. They were to make feints toward landing numbers of troops, but upon the approach of the militia were to retire to shipboard and put out to sea.

Although the militia was kept in readiness for possible service, it was not mobilized until an emergency arose. The method of procedure more or less followed this pattern. A citizen along the coast would observe an unusual movement by the British vessels, — giving every indication of landing troops. He would then run through the woods or over one of the few poor cartpaths to the nearest militiaman with the intelligence. This soldier would in turn, run or ride (for there were no phones, walkie-talkies nor radios) to his company commander. The Captain would alert his superior officer in like manner, — at the same time requisitioning the “town fathers” for supplies for the mission, and immediately mobilizing his company of light infantry. By the time the company was on the way to the point of danger, — fully armed and equipped, — the British had either completed their mission or possibly had not even effected a landing.

At the outbreak of the War of 1812 this inefficient method of operation was completely altered. Strategic locations were carefully selected and pinpointed along our coastline by the authorities. Here forts and defenses were erected by the military to be manned by a company or battalion from towns in the area. These troops, fully armed and equipped, were stationed at these points for a week, two weeks or even a month and were ready to march at a moment's notice if an emergency arose. Upon completion of the tour of duty these units were usually relieved by outfits from their own regiment or brigade. In this way the coast was constantly defended and ready to repel any attempt at an invasion. Our section of New England was not without battles during the formative years of the nation. Many towns were completely destroyed during King Phillip's war which broke out in all its fury in 1675, with considerable loss of life and the accompanying horrors of warfare. During the two wars with our mother country England, the Training Greens were in constant use. The citizenry became very familiar with the sound of fife and drum and the marching feet of enemy troops, and some even experienced the destruction and fears of actual combat.

There was one British mission that brought the War of The Revolution very close to the doors of southeastern Massachusetts when on September 5, 1778 an armada of more than thirty-two British ships dropped anchor off Clark's Cove, New Bedford. This fleet had been “making-up” in New London and Stonington, Connecticut for some time and had been referred to by the natives there as “the New Lun'un Fleet.” This expedition was commanded by Gen. Sir Charles Grey and was ordered by Gen. Sir Henry Clinton to proceed up the coast, — with New Bedford as the objective.



What an awesome sight this scene must have presented to observers on shore as more than thirty-two stately sailing vessels made their way toward Buzzards Bay filled with four thousand of King George's finest scarlet clad regulars. The soldiers which embarked were the 1st Battalion Light Infantry, 1st Battalion Grenadiers and the 33rd, 42nd, 46th and 64th regiments of British regulars. The purpose of the mission was to destroy the shipping and business of "Bedford" and to capture huge stores of military supplies, — field pieces, powder, shot and shell that the Massachusetts Train Artillery had cached there for an emergency some months before. It is of interest that the information or intelligence prompting the expedition had been secured by none other than Capt. John Andre (later *the* Major Andre) who was hung as a spy in the West Point expose in 1780. We recall that King George III caused a monument to be placed in Westminster Abbey attesting to the esteem with which his memory was revered in England.

Effecting a landing the troops burned more than seventy vessels in New Bedford harbor, burned or destroyed twenty business establishments, burned eleven private dwellings and captured the valuable military stores, — the main objective of the mission. Local authorities in reporting to the Legislature set the property loss at \$500,000, — a sum of substantial proportions for those days.

Regaining their ships, the British crossed New Bedford harbor to Fairhaven on the other shore, landing a force that overran Fort Phoenix, — spiking the cannon, destroying the trunions and emplacements and appropriating all serviceable military stores. Fort Phoenix at that time was manned by a very small "housekeeping" unit which recognized the futility of contesting four thousand of the King's finest regulars, so they stubbornly retired. In questioning the lack of militia and Continental troops in New Bedford at this crucial time, it must be remembered that the British had been occupying Rhode Island for three long years and many of our local troops were helping to contest the enemy in that area.

After securing Fort Phoenix the enemy regrouped and penetrated inland for several miles to a point known as Lund's Corner. Here they met a force of from one hundred fifty to two hundred militiamen summoned from Wareham and Middleboro to aid in the fight. The company from Middleboro was commanded by Capt. Amos Washburn and the men from Wareham by Major (later General) Israel Fearing. Major Fearing assumed command of the brisk battle that followed, — when the aging and infirm commanding Colonel felt surrender or even flight might be advisable, because of the disparity in contesting forces. The Major, an excellent officer and masterful tactician succeeded in driving the enemy back to their vessels with his small but determined force. As might be anticipated, the British report of their losses through death, wounds and missing is much less than our eye witness and militia reports that are recorded. There was loss of life on both sides, — though few in number, with some wounded and many missing.

Once again aboard ship, the big fleet put across Buzzards Bay to the town of Falmouth on Cape Cod. That town was heavily shelled all day for having failed to comply with a British blockade edict, — destroying among other things a salt works and several ships. Hoisting sail the British force turned and headed across Vineyard Sound through Quickse's Hole to Holmes' Hole, — now Vineyard Haven on Martha's Vineyard island, where the fleet dropped anchor. General Grey in his official report to his superior Gen. Sir Henry Clinton, writes that he demanded of the islanders of Martha's Vineyard the arms of the militia, the public money, three hundred oxen and ten thousand sheep. The Island officials very reluctantly agreed to the harsh terms but, — because results were so slow to materialize, the General took hostages aboard his forty gun flagship "The Carysfort" and held them there until his demands were met. The General's report records several vessels burned, twenty-eight whale boats captured, a salt works destroyed and much salt confiscated. In his artillery report three hundred eighty-eight stand of muskets with bayonets, pouches, powder and lead were captured. Valuable foodstuffs taken were as so forcefully demanded, — the three hundred oxen and the ten thousand sheep.

After standing by for another few days until additional vessels arrived from Rhode Island upon which they could load their loot, the armada hoisted sail and made its way merrily down the coast to New London and Stonington, — thus completing what the British surely felt was a most successful mission, — for General Grey reported to his superior; "I hold myself much obliged to the commanding officers of Corp and to the troops in general for the alacrity with which every service was performed."

It should always be kept in mind that all through the Revolution and the War of 1812 many of our people remained loyal to England the mother country, — and understandably so. With the outbreak of war in 1812, we find that war very unpopular in this southeastern section of New England. The country was prospering, our commerce was good, towns were feeling their growth and aside from the impressment of our seamen by the British, — many felt that there was no call for hostilities. However, with the growing and powerful British fleet once again patrolling our shores, we find our Training Greens in constant use, with an expanding militia, — but now, officered by men who had gained their military knowledge the hard way during the trying days of the Revolution.

Although much of the action during the War of 1812 was devoted to the sea, there was one operation in this immediate area which called for the mobilization and hastening of the militia to a point of invasion. On June 13, 1814 the good citizens of Wareham learned that the Brig of War "Nimrod" was feeling its way up Buzzards Bay with the possibility of their town being its objective. On the day previous "Nimrod" had picked up a seaman named Samuel Besse on West Island forcibly compelling him to pilot the brigantine up the bay until she was sighted off Mattapoisett at about nine o'clock in the morning on the 13th. At ten o'clock she dropped anchor off Bird Island, promptly lowered and manned six barges, — taking formation two abreast. Each barge carried a large lateen sail, a swivel gun on her bow and was rowed by six oars.

Now with a fair wind and strong tide the little convoy steered directly for Wareham, carrying two hundred Royal Marines. At this point Ebenezer Bourne who had been watching the maneuver, hurried by boat and on foot to the village to inform the Selectmen that invasion was imminent. The alarm was quickly spread throughout the village and riders were dispatched to nearby towns with requests for militia. The Selectmen ordered Major Barrows to gather as many men as possible, prepare all arms and ammunition and hasten to The Narrows to intercept the barges as they approached the wharf. A horseman was hurriedly dispatched to Agawam with orders to inform Capt. Fearing of the alarm and have him call out his men with all haste to the east side of The Narrows.

With muskets loaded the small body of men, gathered under Major Barrows and Capt. Fearing, were ready to stand off the approaching two hundred marines as they came up the river into the village. However, this little band of men was persuaded by two fellow citizens to withhold their fire, — saying that a treaty had been arranged with the enemy to spare private property.

Soon the British came up the channel, — set a white flag, went on to the lower wharf where they landed, paraded and were inspected. Now it developed that after all no treaty had been made, — as the same two citizens approached the commanding British officer under a white flag and proceeded to accomplish that purpose.

The British commanding officer then placed sentinels at strategic points above the village with orders to let no one pass from the town. It is fortunate that word of the invasion had been sent to neighboring towns prior to the landing. With the excitement generated by the landing of the British marines, news had spread like wild fire. One of the persons to hurry to the village was Barker Crocker of West Barnstable, riding into town on his spirited horse. He began pricking the mount with pins until it reached a high state of excitement, rearing and plunging. As Crocker foresaw, the commanding officer ordered him to dismount. This he did and the uninformed Briton had hardly placed his own feet in the stirrups when he found himself flat on his face in the dust, — causing great amusement to marines and spectators alike.

Because of this humiliation the treaty was set aside and the angry officer ordered his men to fire Cosgrove rockets into the cotton factory, setting it afire. With their swivel guns they shelled Parker Mills and burned several vessels that had put into Wareham harbor for safety. The marines looted stores and secured the arms of the militia hidden under the porch of Capt. Jeremiah Bumpus' home. Meanwhile the Captain's daughter Betsy had safely concealed the town records in the woods at the rear of the house. This home was also fired by a rocket but the flames were soon extinguished and it stands today, a house of great beauty.

As the looting continued the British officer received word that militia from several adjacent towns was hastening to the relief of Wareham. He then called in his sentinels, took twelve prominent citizens of the town as hostages, — hurriedly embarked with two of the hostages in each barge, and headed out through The Narrows into Buzzards Bay. As they moved slowly down river, Major Bourne's men wanted desperately to fire upon the British but were compelled to desist for fear of shooting their own friends and neighbors, — held as hostages in each boat. In this manner the invaders moved safely back to the "Nimrod", having dropped the hostages at Cromeset Point and pilot Besse at West Island. Besse, incidentally, was arrested and tried before a magistrate in New Bedford and was clearly acquitted of any crime against the nation.

Later on the "Nimrod" sailed into Buzzards Bay again. However, this time she ran aground off Marion and was forced to push her top tier of cannon from the deck in order to free herself. In recent years fishermen have fouled their gear in the cannon of the famous "Nimrod" of the War of 1812 days.

Of considerable interest to us today is the knowledge that Major General Nathaniel Goodwin of Plymouth was the commanding officer of the Fifth Division which included all militia in this area during the War of 1812. It is said he was none other than the "Cap'n Goodin" whose name appears in that great martial music so often heard on our Training Greens during the early wars, — "Yankee Doodle." For as Captain Goodwin during the Revolution, he commanded a Plymouth company in Rhode Island. He now sleeps on Burial Hill in Plymouth among his Pilgrim ancestors.

In looking back on those stirring early days of our republic and as we think of the men, young and old, who participated in May Training and Muster Day, it is doubtful that they ever thought of themselves as heroes." It is my belief that they liked the thought of arraying themselves in the colorful uniforms of the period and enjoyed the pomp and ceremony of the drills. They liked the association and fraternity of like-minded men. Many it would seem, wanted the "feel" of being members of the same militia unit in which their fathers or older brothers had served. Probably actual combat was the most remote thought in the minds of most of them. However this we know as a certainty, that in the instances of emergency and stress, — when called upon to put their training to a test, they performed well, — so well in fact, that you and I are the direct beneficiaries of the country which they won for us. Behind their rough exteriors, for many lived close to the soil as farmers and artisans, I sense in my reading a deep love of home and a strong faith in God, — a faith inbred through their rugged colonial and Pilgrim ancestry.

With the coming of modern armories, rapid transportation, good roads and instantaneous communications there seems to be little place for nor need of our Training Greens. Thus passes into history a most colorful phase of our way of life in New England. With this passing I am convinced we are presented with a challenge to exert every effort to perpetuate, cherish and protect the memory of our Old Training Greens and their contribution to a glorious history.



## THE OLIVER MILL PARK RESTORATION

### *A report*

by ROLAND WELLS ROBBINS

This is the story of a suburban New England town and its concern for its historical heritage. It is not a new theme; rather, it is an old story. But this story has a different setting. It is relatively easy to get individuals to talk about the history and the past of their community. But to get them to do something about it that goes beyond talking, that is another matter.

This is the story about Middleborough, Massachusetts — a community that not only talked about its three centuries of rich American heritage, but did something about it. Its well laid plans to commemorate the town's 300th anniversary with nine days of exhilarating celebrating in August, 1969, went so smoothly little was left for wanting. It provided joyous entertainment for the citizenry with its parades, costumes, dances, parties, exhibits and open houses. All of this would end at midnight August 10th, not unlike Cinderella's fate at the ball with the stroke of midnight. Then the buntings would be taken down, the exhibits dismantled and the costumes and the frills stored away until the town's 325th or 350th anniversary. The spirit of celebrating the past would dwindle with the reality of the present, and the townspeople would settle back to the normal level of their everyday way of life, each cherishing personal memories of the tercentenary occasion.

Of the many preparations made for Middleborough's tercentenary commemoration, possibly the most unheralded event will provide the most lasting physical accomplishment for the occasion. This was the completion of the first phase of the colonial Oliver Mill Restoration. The Oliver Mill Park dedication took place at 5 P.M. on Sunday, August 3rd, 1969. Mr. Anders Martenson, Middleboro's Town Manager, and members of Middleborough's Board of Selectmen were present with their wives and families. Also present was Mrs. Peter Oliver, a descendant of Judge Peter Oliver, for whom this colonial industrial park was being dedicated.



Scene at the dedication of Oliver Mill Park, August 3, 1969.

I was privileged to be the guest speaker of the Oliver Mill Park dedication. Following is my dedicatory address:

"It is said, "We cannot plan successfully for the future without having a rich knowledge of our past."

For nine busy, mid-twentieth century days you are again living in the past as you pay tribute to Middleborough's heritage during the past three hundred years. These three centuries experienced periods of success, and there were times of failure, to be sure. But the community kept abreast of the growth of the country.

The industrial progress of your colonial times was expansive and unique to say the least. Middleborough's greatest period of colonial industrial success was achieved by Judge Peter Oliver over a period of more than thirty years just prior to the Revolution.

Judge Oliver's inventory of his colonial industries, situated on the earthen dam that crosses the Nemasket River before us, was most impressive. The list:

A grist mill

A saw mill

A boulding mill

A cider mill

A large forge 70 feet long and 50 feet wide, almost new with three fires and in complete repair.

A slitting mill which they had an exclusive right to in New England by Act of Parliament.

The above works stood upon the same dam and on a large river affording a constant supply of water throughout the year.

The appendages to such works were:

A large anchor shop for making of anchor.

A machine for weighing carts and their loadings.

A blacksmith's shop.

A large coal barn 90 feet long and 40 feet wide.

Capacious for one hundred thousands bushels of charcoal. (Site of the charcoal house is probably located below Spring Street)

Three dwelling houses.

Five acres of land.

In speaking of his unusually large supply of water used for turning the many waterwheels that powered his numerous industries here on the Nemasket River, Judge Oliver said, "I have often had eight wheels going at the same time, on one dam, and waste water for eight wheels more — this river was of that importance as to be noted in the map of that province."

During the past three years the citizens of Middleborough have appropriated their money at their Town Meetings to bring about the completion of the first phase of the Oliver Mill Park Restoration, which we are dedicating today.

The deep muds, soils, rubble and the heavy coverage of trees and vegetation that had buried this famous colonial industrial site have been removed and the exposed ruins have been repaired and preserved — thanks to the townspeople of Middleborough.

Not only is this dedication a tribute to Middleborough's colonial industrial past, it is also a tribute to the citizens of Middleborough for their vision and the desire to reestablish the physical features of the colonial times, so that they would serve as a constant reminder of their heritage.

With no *state, government, industry, nor private financial assistance*, the people of Middleborough have made possible the completion of the intricate historical, archaeological and architectural project that we dedicate today as Oliver Mill Park.

But this is only the beginning. Much more remains to be done!

The ruins at the site of the 19th century sawmill should be preserved, and the fish ladder we built should be extended out to the end of the sawmill's waterwheel pit.

The ruins of Peter Oliver's slitting mill, situated just beyond the refinery-forge site should be excavated and its waterwheel pits and raceways restored.

And the section of the old dam we restored should be continued all the way across the Nemasket River, and the old road that once crossed the dam should be reestablished as a colonial landmark.



Foundations for a building and stonework for a raceway as it looked when first excavated.

The ruins that survive on the northerly side of the river should be excavated, repaired and preserved.

To fulfill these projects would provide Middleborough with a unique, unmatched Colonial Industries Restoration.

Instead of looking out at four restored waterways through which water now flows, one would witness eight or more restored waterways with water flowing through them, stretching from one embankment of the Nemasket River across to the other.

The ultimate goal should be the reestablishment of the Colonial Industrial Scene that once dominated this site, with the reconstruction of the gristmill, sawmill, refinery-forge, slitting mill, boulding mill, cider mill, the large anchor shop and the workshops that thrived from the ever-flowing waters of the Nemasket River.

To fulfill such an ambitious program of restoration would reveal one of America's most unusual and attractive restorations.

By sponsoring Phase One of the Oliver Mill Park Restoration the citizens of Middleborough have exposed the unlimited potential of this colonial site.

Now is the time for outside assistance to come to the aid of the Oliver Mill Park Restoration. This can be in the form of local businesses, private sources, industrial, state and governmental subsidies. I imagine that all contributions to the Oliver Mill Park Restoration — both large and small — would be gratefully received by the town.

I am personally indebted to the late Lawrence Romaine, my friend of many years standing, for first bringing to my attention the history of this site and its unusual potential for restoration purposes. Larry devoted many years to furthering the cause of Middleborough and its history. The work that has been accomplished at the Oliver Mill Park Restoration would meet with Larry's enthusiastic approval, I'm sure.

Many Middleborough citizens and committees have worked diligently during the past three years to make possible this dedication.

I am indebted to Bill Byrne for his efficient service in excavating and landscaping the site, transforming it from a hodgepodge of 19th and 20th century rubble and jungle back to its natural colonial terrain. Napoleon DesRosiers, Jr. built the new wooden waterwheel pits and raceways, and Robert Candee was the project engineer. These men are residents of Middleborough.

My special thanks go to Al Robbins, Superintendent of Middleborough's Highways, for the numerous contributions of assistance he and his men have made for this project.

Last — but not least — I am indebted to Mr. Anders Martenson, your Town Manager, and to the Board of Selectmen. Their assistance and cooperation left nothing to be desired. For this I am most grateful.

It now gives me great pleasure to present to Mr. Paul Anderson, Chairman of the Middleborough Board of Selectmen, the keys that control the flood gates of the Oliver Mill Park Restoration.

May the waters of the Nemasket River forever flow down the streams of time."



Oliver Mill Park as it looks today on a quiet Sunday morning.



## AN INDIAN BURIAL SITE IN NORTH MIDDLEBORO

By William B. Taylor

Weston's History of the Town of Middleborough locates the main burying ground of the Nemasket Indians on Muttock Hill. It has become evident during the last 22 years that the Indian settlement at Titicut contained at least two of the largest Indian graveyards in Plymouth County.

The principal encampments were at Fort Hill, about a quarter of a mile above Pratt's Bridge, and at the old shipyard, a quarter of a mile below Pratt's Bridge. They extended along the banks of both sides of the river for a distance of approximately one mile. Both sites are typical Indian locations as they are situated on high ground, at a bend in the river, which offers an excellent view in two directions. Nearby woods had abundant game. Numerous springs at both sites and adjoining fields ideally suited to the raising of corn added much to the attractiveness of this area. There was an abundance of fish in the river below, across which a fishing weir was built.<sup>1</sup> There are two fording or wading places across the river, both located below Pratt's Bridge. All these advantages plus a water route to the ocean for shell-fish made Titicut an ideal Indian settlement.

The Titicut Site is located on the Bridgewater side of the Taunton River near the old shipyard. From the years 1946 to 1951, members of the Warren King Moorehead Chapter of the Massachusetts Archaeological Society made an extensive excavation of this area.<sup>2</sup> Under the direction of Dr. Maurice Robbins of Attleboro, twenty-six graves were discovered — made between 1500 and 1620 A.D. Artifacts of European origin were associated with some of these burials. Projectile points, pendants and beads of copper or brass and the stem of an European clay pipe all tend to date these burials. Also the presence of perishable materials such as birch bark and deer skin are indications of no great antiquity.

Some conclusions arrived at from the excavations of these burials are as follows:

1. Most burials have an oval shaft (see Fig. No. 1) and are usually oriented along a northeast-southwest line.
2. Most skeletons were flexed, were upon the right side, head to the southwest and facing east.<sup>3</sup>
3. Hands are usually drawn up before the face and the knees drawn up in front of the stomach.
4. Most grave shafts will contain charcoal and traces of fire plus patches of white sand from a lower depth, which has become mixed up during the refilling of the grave shaft. In some instances, traces of red paint appear throughout the grave shaft and especially heavy directly over the skeleton. The outline of a grave shaft will appear just below the humus (loam) and at the junction of the yellow soil with the disturbance becoming increasingly thicker until the presence of bone is discovered.

5. Of the 26 individuals found, fifteen were sufficiently preserved to be removed for further study. This study was undertaken by the Department of Physical Anthropology at Peabody Museum, Harvard University, by Dr. Edward E. Hunt, Jr. Findings from this examination revealed not only the age, sex and features of the Titicut Indians, but also some conclusions as to the habits, behavior and dietary of these people. These deductions came from their teeth, the shapes of the long bones and the ruggedness of some of the muscle attachments. Mortality characteristics show the high frequency of death before middle age and the high incidence of female deaths during childbirth.



Fig. 1 This grave shaft (grave no. 4) was uncovered on Taylor Farm, North Middleboro, in 1954.

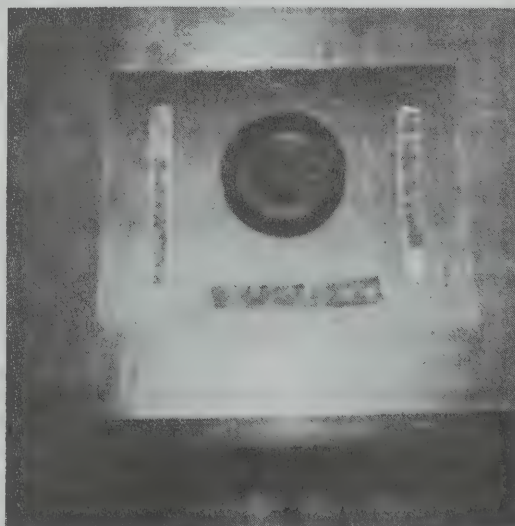


Fig. 2 Discoidal and glass trade beads from graves No. 2 and No. 4. Beads have been restrung in original pattern and are only a small portion of whole necklace.

In 1947 on land owned by William H. Taylor, which is directly across the Taunton River from the Titicut Site, grave No. 1 was discovered. This discovery resulted after portions of a large apple orchard were cleared and the land plowed for the first time in many years. The site is a sandy hillside about a quarter of a mile west of Vernon Street. I excavated the skeleton of an adult female with no grave goods present.

Upon expanding the grave shaft, I encountered the outline of grave No. 2. Members of Massachusetts Archaeological Society, under the direction of Dr. Robbins, were called in to remove this grave. They discovered the remains of an adult male along with an unusual ceremonial stone called a discoidal (see Fig. No. 2). It is 4 inches in diameter by 1¼ inches thick, made of finely polished black slate. First impressions remind the viewer of a doughnut as the center is concave, tapering to a ¼ inch hole in the center.

The discoidal was put by Indians on the graves of their dead, placing food in the concave surface for the departed spirits. This type of artifact is quite scarce in New England and was probably highly prized by its owner.

In 1948 grave No. 3 was uncovered. This was the only red paint burial to date. The grave shaft was heavily impregnated with red ochre. This skeleton was in such a very advanced state of disintegration that determination of sex was impossible. No grave goods were present.

During January of 1954, while hunting, I noticed pieces of human bone on top of a newly dug woodchuck hole. Dr. Robbins identified these fragments of bone as part of the pelvis and ankle bone. This lucky discovery led to the most important burial thus far. In the spring, Dr. Robbins and members of the M.A.S. uncovered grave No. 4, which turned out to be a chief accompanied by many trade artifacts. (see Fig. No. 3, 4, 5) There are two iron hoes, one copper kettle, one mirror, one pair scissors, one beaver skin cap partially preserved by the copper kettle, <sup>4</sup> plus hundreds of glass trade beads (see Fig. 2), mostly blue with some faded grey. Dr. Robbins poured plaster-of-paris underneath the skull in order to obtain a mold of the original design of this large necklace. Beads were then restrung on new string in the original pattern, consisting of seven beads inside with ½ inch long blue tubular beads bordering.

In addition to the trade artifacts there was an 11 inch stone pestle and two very fine clay pots. Both are identified as Stage 4 ceramic pots made between 1600-1675 A.D. These pots show Iroquoian influence as they have globular bottoms and deeply undercut necks directly below a collar with four castellations. The smaller pot is one of the smallest ever found in New England and unusual in the fact that it was found in one piece. <sup>5</sup> The large pot has three unusual bands below the collar, perhaps the potters personal creative design.

Due to the influx of English goods, potters after 1650 lost their creative design ability and reverted to copying colonial metal vessels such as the copper kettle shown. (see Fig. No. 3)

This grave has become known as the Poole (or Titicut) Purchase Grave, as it was found on lands purchased by Elizabeth Poole and several associates in 1637 from the Titicut Indians and includes many of the trinkets with which the land had been bought.

This interesting grave is one of seven dioramas on display at the Bronson Museum, Attleboro, Massachusetts. The Museum is located on the 5th floor of the 8 North Main Street Building. Museum hours are from 9:30 to 4:30 Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays.



Fig. 3 Grave goods from grave No.4, showing two iron hoes, two clay pots, and one copper kettle.



Fig. 4 Three fine clay pots from graves No. 4 and No. 5..Center mortuary pot is of Shantok style.



Fig. 5 Excavation of the Poole Purchase Grave revealed the remains of a chief accompanied by the trinkets with which the land had been bought.



Grave No. 5 was also found in the late spring of 1954 and revealed an infant contact burial. Sex is uncertain. Buried with the infant was a very fine Stage 4 small mortuary pot and numerous glass beads. Most of these beads were blue with a few reds and whites—probably an embroidered design on an outer vest or jacket. Also noted were a few seed beads but in a bad state of decomposition.

The clay pot (see Fig. No. 4) has prominent lobes formed about the base of its collar plus four fairly high castellations. This style is reminiscent of Shantok pottery and is rarely found in New England beyond the Pequot territory of southern Connecticut.

In October 1957, while digging the well for my house, six more skeletons were unearthed. These included five adults and one child with no grave artifacts present. The discovery of copper pins and nails point to the late 1600's as the probable burial date. It was the custom of this late period to wrap bodies, in an extended position, in heavy bark and secure the wrappings with pins or nails (see Fig. No. 6).

Traces of charcoal, particularly heavy over the grave of the child were found indicating the continued practice of burning fires over a grave site to destroy and remove human scent, which might attract marauding wolves and other predatory animals.

Lack of grave goods and manner of burial lead us to believe that these Indians were members of the praying Indians<sup>6</sup> of Titicut. Although some of them finally consented to burial in white-man cemeteries, most Indians still preferred to be buried in their old burial grounds.

During April of 1958, while excavating the foundation for my house by bulldozer, ten more graves were uncovered bringing the total to twenty-one. These too were of the same era of contact burials as the six near the well.<sup>7</sup> All bones were gathered together from the backfill and reinterred. One interesting observation was the size of one skeleton. Both arm and leg bones were over two inches longer than my own. This Indian must have been an exceptionally large man — well over 6' 6" in height.

After the excavations of the Titicut Site, many members of the M.A.S. joined to form the Cohannet Chapter. In 1952 and 1953 this new group discovered and excavated the Indian Fort at Fort Hill. It was found to be located on the hill above Sentinel or Table Rock.<sup>8</sup> The Fort, rectangular in shape, measured 41' 6" by 35' deep with the longer side lying along the river. Approximately 150 small artifacts were recovered inside, one third of which were contact material items of glass, copper, clay, etc.

During this period and the many years which my father and I dug at Fort Hill, no graves were discovered. This has led to the belief that the main cemetery for these Indians was the Taylor Farm on Vernon Street. Only time and future excavations will prove or disprove this theory.

4 Portions of the woven handle of the copper kettle were found intact also. These perishable items are preserved by copper salts.

5 Most pots are "killed" or have the bottoms deliberately broken (to release the spirits) during the burial ceremony. Earth pressure through the years will collapse the sides.

6 There were thirty members, more or less, of the Indian Church on Pleasant Street, North Middleboro, between the years 1650-1760.

7 In November 1967, seven more of these contact burials were found off Atkinson Drive, off South Street, Bridgewater, Massachusetts. These Indians too are thought to belong to the Church in North Middleboro.

8 The Fort Site is at an elevation of 35' above the Taunton River and 1200' above Pratt's Bridge.



Fig. 6 Skeleton of child in foreground (grave No. 10) and adult male in background (grave No. 8).

1 The remains of this weir are still visible when the river is low — located about 75 feet above Pratt's Bridge.

2 Radio-carbon dates confirm an occupation at the Titicut Site over a period of at least 5,000 years and covers 3 cultural periods.

3 This position is also the same for the two dogs found buried at the Titicut Site.



Princess Teweelema, last Princess of the Wampanoag Tribe Photographed, May 1905. Picture given to Middleborough Public Library by Mrs. C. R. Weld, Middleboro. Used by courtesy of the Public Library.



## PRINCESS TEWEELEMA

Considerable space having been allotted in the last issues to the Indians of Pilgrim days and before, it seemed appropriate to devote a few words to the Indians that many of us can remember: Princess Teweelēma (Melinda Mitchell) her sister Princess Wootonekanuske (Charlotte) and their mother, Zervia Gould Mitchell, who were the last of the Wamponoags. In the following article, the description of these three women is not as we knew them, described as tall and arrogant, but when the author of the article called upon them, in 1883, they had been at "Betty's Neck" on Lake Assawampsett only four years, and all were young, vigorous women. Undoubtedly the years of continual defeats they encountered in trying to fend off the white man and hold on to the bit of land that was theirs by direct inheritance from Chief Massasoit, and the virtual poverty in which they were forced to live, saddened and embittered them as well as aged them.

When first they came to Betty's Neck in 1879, they lived in the tents in which the travelers found them, but later were able to construct a tiny cottage. From a small vegetable garden they eked out their sustenance, and in later years, Charlotte (Princess Wootonekanuske) was a familiar figure in her Indian costume, visiting the summer colonies about the Lake and going by trolley car to Middleboro to sell her vegetables. The sisters also wove baskets to sell. Princess Teweelēma always wore her full Indian regalia when appearing in public, particularly when appearing before the State Legislature to make an appeal for a yearly stipend. At long last, she was granted an annual pension of \$300.

Princess Teweelēma died in 1919 and was buried in North Abington, Massachusetts, in her Indian costume. Princess Wootonekanuske lived on alone in the lonely cottage deep in the woods until she was eighty-two years of age. She died in 1930. One of her final acts took place in 1921 when she unveiled the statue of Massasoit on Cole's Hill overlooking Plymouth Rock at the 300th anniversary of the Landing of the Pilgrims, an act she preformed reluctantly, because she never forgave the white man for his injustice and treachery toward the Indian.

## A SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY

In November, 1885, Harper's Weekly New Monthly Magazine printed an article entitled, "An Indian Journey." The journey took the author and her companions from Bridgewater, over the old road to Middleboro through the Indian country so well known to Massasoit and King Philip, up Muttok Hill and past the site of "Oliver Hall," past Lake Assawampsett to Marion, Mattapoisett and Fairhaven. "New Bedford would have repaid a longer stay," but the travelers were eager to reach their goal, Nonquit. On the return trip, a stop was made to visit "the remnants of an old Indian tribe," and thus, in their humble dwelling in a pine grove by the lake, they came upon the last descendants of the great Chief Massasoit: the mother, Zervia Gould Mitchell and her two daughters, Melinda (Princess Teweelēma) and Charlotte, (Princess Wootonekanuske).

While much of the article deals with towns other than Middleboro, these places are well known to Middleboreans and it is interesting to read of them as they were over one hundred years ago.

The old inn referred to was doubtless the old Sproat Tavern on Plymouth Street and the church, the First Congregational Church at the Green.

## AN INDIAN JOURNEY

It took form and shape in a certain studio standing among green things of September, one afternoon when a wood fire was a happy thing to look at and sit near, and when ideas of long drives over a quiet country were perhaps accented by glimpses without of a level meadow and a vagrant garden full of stillness and color.

From the wide-open door of this studio one can see a path, a flight of steps, an arch of trees, the dense green of box bordering, and then a wide and verdant meadow and pine trees, a fringe of willows and the faint shimmer of a stream in the distance. To the left the meadowlands seem to roll on in contented fertility, but here and there rise belts or curving lines of woodlands, remnants, no doubt, of the old forests of Miles Standish's day. The river takes its own course pleasantly through these, and if you leave the studio and go down a quiet, shady walk and out between the hay-stacks to the road, you may reach in ten minutes the bridge, the rising slope, and the rocky hill-top where, one May morning long ago, a company of gentlemen, with Mr. Standish prominent among them, made a memorable purchase.

We had lingered on this bridge one day, talking in an idle fashion of the early Pilgrim times when that party came from Duxbury to survey the land now known as East Bridgewater, then the fishing ground of old Massasoit and his men, and it was an easy transition from talking of the country to planning a drive across it, when, although perhaps our keenest joy would be in the wild flowers on the wayside, the old houses, old furniture, and 18th century associations we might find, there should still be much of Pilgrim interest. We had no intention, I am sure, of making any aboriginal investigations, and yet we found that everywhere suggestions of the Indian in his most picturesque, as well as warlike moments, confronted us; not the red man of Cooper's novels, exactly, nor the hunted, half-civilized, bedraggled creature of the plains; rather the Indian of legendary lore, the gaunt, bold figure that confronted Captain Standish and his men, the brave, pathetic chieftain who pledged and kept his faith with the white man, and as well the Indian who destroyed villages and tortured captives, yet who left in that fair and fertile region names that are like music in the ears and rhyme upon the tongue, whose haunts yet are to be seen with the glamour of his best hours upon them — silent lakes and dim forest lands, hill-tops and plains that are called by his names, and still have the pensive charm and grace of his sovereignty about them — and whose stories are fast vanishing into obscurity. Indeed, in this very journey they were often dimmed by the more fascinating associations of our own forefathers — an 18th century interior, the sight of an old gown, a high-backed chair, a bit of early English china, putting out, as it were, the light of the wigwam, "the plumage of rare birds," or couch of leopard-skin which belonged to the days of the Indian Princess Wetamoo.

We made no very definite plans, but knew that we should drive from Bridgewater to Nonquit — the latter looking on our map a reasonable destination, and, as we knew, beloved of painters. The rocks where Standish and his friends made the purchase of Bridgewater were really our starting-point. They rise to the left of an old mill and are characterized by nothing specially significant, unless the neighborhood of a fine old house and the outlook of a quiet country are suggestive of days gone by. The story of the purchase is interesting and strongly typical of that time. The colonists at Duxbury and Plymouth were anxious to extend their lands; it was well known among



them that Massasoit, the chief of Poconocket, valued that part of the country for its fertility and the usefulness of its streams. No doubt, Mr. Standish and his friends Southworth and John Alden rode over through the pine woods and across the fields to make a survey of the ground before they entered upon its purchase. We know that they went on to Nemasket — the Middleborough of today — where Massasoit's wigwam was situated, and had friendly and pleasant interviews with the chief (who, says an old chronicler, "had his face painted a sad red") but it was not until May of 1649 that the purchase of the country, blooming and timbered, and widely fertile, was made.

Miles Standish and the other thrifty Englishmen had decidedly the best of the bargain. They received seven miles of land east and west, north and south, with every privilege of woods and streams, meadows and underwoods, paying Ousamequin, as Massasoit was often called, with a curious collection of articles.

In the only published history of Bridgewater that we came across, the old treaty is given, with its quaint effect marred by correct English and a systematic arrangement. By good luck we had the original paper in our hands, and a strange old document it is, having had a history of its own since that May morning when Standish laid it out upon the rocks in the bright spring sunshine for Massasoit's approval and that of the company of buyers.

It is written on one sheet of the stiff, course-grained paper used in that day, the handwriting evidently Standish's or Southworth's and sets forth in careful terms what the Indians are to give up, and below, written evidently without special deliberation, since corrections are made, are the following articles in place of purchase-money:

- 7 coats, a yard and a half in each coat
- 9 hatchets
- 8 hoes
- 20 knives
- 4 Moose-skins
- 10 yards and a half of cotton

Miles Standish  
Samuel Nash  
Constant Southworth

Standish has written his name carelessly, at least with less precision than Nash and Southworth, but the name had for us a curious fascination, bringing to mind the brave, strong-minded Pilgrim of that day, with his sturdy common-sense, his courageous heart, his anxious love-making. It seemed easy to picture him foremost in the group. As we drove across the bridge we could fancy how, that crooked "Myles Standish" having been written, he let his gaze sweep the country. We wondered if he thought of the time when his young wife Rose had come there with him, or did he think of how her successor, Barbara, would like this hunting ground of the Indians as home?

We left the Wanicoto Hill, where the treaty was signed, in the golden part of one afternoon, turning our horse's head toward the country known as the Lowlands.

Down this road, beneath these very trees, marched a quickly summoned band of Bridgewater men and lads in the March of 1675. War had burst upon that quiet, unprotected country. King Philip, anxious to avenge his brother's death as well, no doubt, as to profit himself, broke his treaty of peace with the white men, and war was let loose upon the land.

Those war times were certainly a change from the days when the Pilgrims rode peacefully across this country to visit Massasoit and his men in their wigwams at the Middleborough of today. The old chief of the Wampanoags was always called, and with justice, the friend of the Pilgrims. In his old age Massasoit took his two sons, Wamsutta and Pomatacome (Alexander and Philip) to Plymouth where, in the presence of the Governor, they swore eternal fidelity to the English.

The story of that time is almost startling in its romantic incident, cast as it is against a background of gray Puritanism, commonplace, uneventful lives of toil, and monotonous activity in field or forge, or at the fireside. It began to be whispered, about the year 1670, that Alexander and Philip, the old chieftains's sons, were only too anxious for an excuse for war. Alexander was suspected of some special intrigue, and Winslow ordered his arrest. The Indian king is described as a man of most majestic bearing, and a pride which was only second to his love of country and his race. To be taken captive to Plymouth fairly broke his heart. He attempted but slight resistance; it would seem that his spirit was too crushed for any outbreak; but at his side marched Wetamoo, his wife, who is described as the most striking feminine figure in that company of Wampanoags. From the first she cherished the bitterest, most vindictive spirit against her husband's captors, and when she saw him sink into illness, her anger knew no bounds. The question of how to end his captivity was soon settled. For it was evident that the Indian chief was dying. He prayed so earnestly to be taken back to Nemasket that his captors could not but yield in the face of the dread messenger of Death. So a melancholy procession set forth.

An old chronicle gives the story of his last hours. It was in sight of the Nemasket River he died.

"They took the unhappy king upon a litter, and entered the trails of the forest. They reached the banks of the river. There they took canoes and crossed over. It soon became manifest that their monarch was dying. They placed him on a grassy mound beneath a majestic tree, and in silence the warriors gathered around to witness the departure of his spirit to the realms of the red man's immortality."

Driving over that still and peaceful country, it seemed almost impossible to realize that two hundred years ago "the roads ran blood" and "the woods were strewn with bones," that the air was full of smoke and fire and the lamentations of women and children, driven forth or tortured in their homes. It seems marvelous indeed that any one escaped who was taken into captivity. Mrs. Rowlandson, the wife of a clergyman at Lancaster, wrote a pitiful account of her captivity, which endured some time before she was taken to Nemasket, where she met King Philip. In an old letter of the time we read that the country looked most "fair and fruitful." In the midst of its bloom were the wigwams of Philip and his sister-in-law Wetamoo. Of the latter Mrs. Rowlandson has much to say in a naive way, she having been the servant of the haughty squaw during her captivity. "A proud and severe dame she was, bestowing every day in dressing herself nearly as much time as any of the gentry in the land, powdering her hair and painting her face, going with necklaces and jewels in her ears and bracelets upon her arms."





PRINCESS TEWEELEEMA, (Melinda Mitchell), THE LAST OF  
THE WAMPANOAG TRIBE

(See Gladys Vigers' History of Town of Lakeville)

### THE ABORIGINAL HISTORY OF MIDDLEBORO (From an old scrap book)

Presented by a panel of five members at the February 1964 meeting of the Middleborough Historical Association.

In connection with a physical sanitary survey of Middleboro made by Dr. E. T. Whitney of Boston several years ago upon the occasion of his graduation from the Harvard Medical school and preserved in the archives of Harvard University, is the following aboriginal history of Middleboro.

... That part of the Province of Plymouth which later was to be set apart as "Ye Towne of Middleberry" the Pilgrims found occupied by the Nemasket Indians, a tribe belonging to the Pokanoket Nation, one of the five principal Indian Confederacies occupying New England at that time. These Confederacies were made up of numerous tribes, each under the rule of a Sachem, and all the tribes under the control of a real Sachem, or "King," as he was called by the New England settlers.

A Pilgrim Father was not, however, the first white dweller in what is now Middleboro. History records that Thomas Dermer, a captain under John Smith, in 1619, a year and a half before the landing of the Pilgrims, rescued a Frenchman from

the Nemaskets, where he had long resided as a slave to that tribe.

... Dermer was accompanied from England by an Indian name Tisquantum, better known by the contracted name of "Squanto." He was one of the Indians captured by Hunt and later released or escaped from slavery and made his way to England.

It is known that for three years he had lived with a prominent English family where he had been well treated, and had accompanied Dermer on a former trip to New Foundland. He was making this trip as a native guide and interpreter for the captain and with expectations of then returning to his native tribe. Dermer dismissed his ship, laden with a cargo of furs and fish for England, and in a five ton open boat re-explored the coast from Maine to Cape Cod, and accompanied by Squanto, visited many Indian villages and tribes. The place designated on the map made by John Smith in 1614 as "New Plymouth" was at that time occupied by the Patuxet Indians, Squanto's native tribe. His homecoming after years of exile must have been a grievous disappointment to this Indian stoic, for he found to greet on his arrival only the bleached bones of his tribe, all of which had been wiped out by the great Indian plague of 1616-17-18.

... A unique conference between a representative of a European Power and native Kings of this country, the first in history, took place on Muttok's Hill, Middleboro. On Capt. Dermer's departure, he left Squanto behind, who later was to figure prominently in the early history of the Pilgrims. ... The parley was a momentous occasion for the Colonists. With much caution on both sides a parley was arranged, the Pilgrims offering hostages for the safe return of Massasoit and his followers. They received the great chief with much formality, gifts and all the hospitality they could offer. They set before him their best "strong water" and under its mellowing influence a friendly compact was entered into at which a peace treaty was drawn up and ratified by both parties, for an offensive and defensive alliance.

By its terms it was agreed that should either party be attacked by an enemy, the other would come to their assistance. While the treaty was of the greatest possible importance to the settlers, it was also a no less satisfactory one to Massasoit, whose tribes had been so weakened by the ravages of the great plague, that they stood in grave danger from attacks of the fierce Narragansetts, the Indian Confederacy to their south. The white settlers with their murderous guns should prove a most valuable ally and the satisfaction and pleasure of the Great Chief was most substantially expressed by donating to the Pilgrims the land they had already appropriated for their settlement, together with all the lands formerly occupied by the Patuxets. This included the present towns of Plymouth, Duxbury, Carver, Kingston, Plympton, Marshfield, Wareham and part of Halifax, extending from the coast inland to about the present boundary of Middleboro and included a part of this town as it was when incorporated. This treaty was fairly well kept by both sides until Massasoit's death some forty years later.

It was characteristic of the Indians to select for their habitations slightly locations where there were streams of fresh water, good hunting and fishing grounds, rich soil for the cultivation of their maize and high elevations the better to observe the approach of hostile enemies. The land of the Nemaskets was well supplied with these requirements. Their principal settlement, where their Sachem resided, was on Muttok's Hill, a high elevation on the Nemasket River a short distance from the village of Middleboro. There were two other settlements on the river and others around the shores of the beautiful Assawompsett. The favorable site selected by the Pilgrims for their immediate settlement, with its numerous acres of nearby tillage land, previously cleared by the Indians, was the former home of the Patuxet Indians, a neighboring tribe to the Nemaskets, that had been completely wiped out by some contagious disease shortly before the coming of the Colonists.

In the early summer, following the planting season, the



settlers planned a return call of Massasoit's visit. The trip was undertaken by Edward Winslow and Stephen Hopkins with Squanto as guide. They took with them presents for the King, which included a scarlet coat and some fine laces, intending to stop the first night at "Nemaschet, a Towne under Massasoit." This was the first visit of any Pilgrim to Nemasket, the present town of Middleboro, or any other Indian settlement. They were hospitably received and food placed before them consisting principally of "Maizum," described by the travelers as being made from acorns, shad roe and ground maize, or corn.

One month later the startling news was brought to the Pilgrims that Massasoit had been captured or driven from the country by the Narragansetts and that Corbitant was known to be actively hostile to the white settlers and a traitor to Massasoit with designs for replacing his chief as ruler of the Pokanokets. It being known to the Colonists that Corbitant was at Nemasket seeking the following of that tribe, they dispatched Squanto and Hobomok, a friend and councilor of Massasoit, to Nemasket, to secretly learn if possible the intentions of the traitor and the whereabouts of Massasoit. They were betrayed to Corbitant, who pronounced sentence of death on the two Indians, declaring that with Squanto out of the way, "the English would lose their tongue." As he personally approached Squanto to execute the sentence, Hobomok, an Indian of powerful physique, broke away from his guard and escaped. He hurriedly made his return to the settlers where he reported the details and his belief that Squanto had been killed. A well-armed military expedition of fourteen men under Miles Standish was hastily dispatched to Nemasket, with orders for the beheading of Corbitant in the event of Squanto's death. A midnight surprise attack was made on the lodge pointed out as his by Hobomok. With terrifying discharges of their firearms, a warfare new to the natives, they burst in on the terror-stricken braves, but found that the wily Sachem and his followers had fled, and fearing the vengeance of the settlers, had refrained from the slaughter of Squanto. A court martial was held the next morning at Nemasket village, following this first military expedition in New England, at which all the natives repudiated Corbitant and pledged their allegiance to Massasoit.

... It is not known when the first Pilgrim made a permanent settlement in what is now Middleboro, many of the earlier records having been destroyed or lost in the Indian war that followed Massasoit's death. Until 1627, the Pilgrims lived as a community centre, all property, both real and personal, being held as common property. The Pilgrims were joint stockholders in a company formed in London, the financiers being designated in the company's articles of agreement, as "Adventurers," and those donating their personal services, as the "Planters." The value of the shares were placed at ten pounds each and each able-bodied "Planter" sixteen years or more of age, rated as one share, and if he contributed to the cause, a wife, servant, a child over sixteen years of age or commodities of ten pounds value, each such contribution constituted an additional share to his credit. Children under sixteen and over ten years of age were rated as half a share. The purpose of the company was to make profits by trading, fishing, planting or by any legitimate means of money making that might occur in the settlement of a new country. At the end of seven years, the profits, real estate and personal property was to be equally distributed among the shareholders and the company dissolved.

... Reference is made in records filed in 1662, of purchases made from the Indians at Titicut in Middleboro, as early as 1633, but it was a quarter of a century from the time of the Pilgrims' deliverance from the Adventurers before they came in numbers to settle in Middleboro. This data is substantiated to some degree by the records of the First Church of Christ, established here on December 26, 1694, which commenced with the quotation from Deut. 8:2: "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord, thy God, hath led thee these forty years." It is reasonable to suppose this quotation was meant literally, as it was written into the records by the pastor, Mr. Samuel Fuller, who had preached to the Middleboro settlers since before the burning of the town by the Indians in 1675-76.

... What the number was of these early settlers, who they were, about the interesting details concerning the organization of the little town and of its social and civic affairs for the following six years, we have limited knowledge for its records shared in the destruction of the town itself in its early infancy. From the Plymouth records, in deeds of lands purchased from the Indians, as office holders, from the record of birth and deaths, in family note books and various other similar sources, we find the names of some sixty pre-war residents. A large percentage of these were children and grandchildren of the Pilgrim Fathers. Two are recorded as original passengers of the Mayflower, Francis Billington and Samuel Eaton.

... Their cabins were erected on little farms purchased, or traded for, from the Indians for the owner's individual needs, but the Colonists were ever ready to see any advantage in a trade and anticipating future values in real estate, commenced a heavy speculation in the Indian lands of Middleboro some years before its incorporation. The first big transaction was made on March 7, 1661, when the Indian Sachem Wampatucke sold to Capt. Southworth on behalf of the Court, the northern part of the present Middleboro and part of Halifax, east of the Nemasket River and north of "the Indian trail to Plimouth from the wading place at the Nemmassakett River." This was called the upper trail. There were two Indian paths leading from Plymouth to Nemasket which converged into one shortly before reaching the wading place located near the present bridge that crosses the Nemasket River on East Main Street. The wading place was a prominent land mark in designating directions and running bounds.

... The purchase of the big tract of land deeded by Wampatucke to Capt. Southworth was made in the interests of twenty-six original purchasers and is known as "The Twenty-six Men's Purchase." According to the Plymouth Registry of Deeds the purchase was made for the sum of ten pounds. Many of the original owners figured prominently in the early history of the town. Three of the number, Francis Cook, John Howland, and George Soule were passengers in the Mayflower and several were later purchasers in other large tracts of Indian lands in Middleboro.

... The largest deal made was known as the "Sixteen Shilling Purchase," which comprised practically the whole of what was later set apart as the town of Lakeville, and embraced the whole of Assawompsett, Elders and Pocksha Ponds and nearly all of Great and Little Quitticas and Long Ponds. It was sold on May 14, 1673, for thirty-three pounds and divided among seventy-one purchasers.

... All Indian place names were descriptive of the locality to which they were attached, more particularly of the peculiar characteristics of the place itself. A list follows of Indian place names still retained in the former territory of "The Towne of Middleberry," together with interesting probable derivations and translations.

Nemasket, Namasket, Namaschet, Namaskett, Namasacut, Namasstaquet.

The former Indian name for Middleboro, the name of the Indian tribe that occupied it, and earlier name for Assawompsett Pond and the retained present name of the river that flows from it into the Taunton River. The name is also applied to a small settlement and railroad station in Middleboro as well as to the hotel, many business firms and societies. Its derivation was probably from Namas—"fish"; auk—"place," et—"at or near."

Assawompsett, Assawompsett, Assowamsett.

A large pond in Middleboro and Lakeville, the largest sheet of fresh water in the state. . . For many years in the latter part of the eighteenth century much iron ore of fair grade was mined from its shallow depths. . . The word is probably from three Indian words, (n) asha—"middle" "between" or "half-way," omps—"an upright or prominent rock," and et—"at" or "near." "At or near the half-way rock." The name probably



applied to the prominent rock on which the village of Rock now stands which was about half-way between Plymouth and Massasoit's headquarters. . . .

. . . . Muttock.

A high and picturesque elevation on the westerly side of the Nemasket River, about a mile below the "wading place" and a short distance north of the present village of Middleboro . . . . The name Muttock was a contraction of Kehesemuttug—"great shoulders" . . . .

. . . . Tispaquin, Tispequin, Tespaquin, Tuspaquin, Tuspequin.

. . . . Tispaquin was probably the son of the Pond Sachem. He took for a squaw a daughter of Massasoit and was therefore a brother-in-law of King Philip.

. . . . Titicut, Teghtacutt, Kehtchicut, Cutuhtikut, Catuh-tut, Tetiquid.

This word was probably originally Kehtchicut, from kehti—"chief" "greatest," tuck—"large river." The name was abbreviated and corrupted to Titicut.

. . . . Fall Brook.

The Indian name for it was Sawcomet, given as a boundary in Tispaquin's deed of the Henry Wood Purchase of August 9, 1667, "to that part of ye brook that is stony like to a fall, called Sawcomet."

. . . . The word Massasoit meant "Great Chief." [Massasoit died in 1661. He was succeeded by his son Alexander, who was succeeded by another son, Wamsutta, who was succeeded by Massasoit's second son, Philip.] Philip was the leader of the bloodiest and most destructive Indian War of New England. . . . Philip feared the encroachment upon their lands of the white settlers and early in his reign commenced scheming with all the neighboring Sachems he could influence for the extermination of the Colonists. . . . His plans had not been completed when the murder of the Indian, John Sassamond, precipitated the war fully a year ahead of his intentions. John Sassamond had been a student at Harvard, was a protege of the Indian apostle, John Eliot, and was appointed a preacher at the Indian church at Nemasket. He had acted as a secretary to Philip and having knowledge of his intentions, his loyalty to the whites led him to disclose the plans against the Colonists to the authorities at Plymouth. . . . Knowledge of his act reached Philip, who plotted his death, and a week later he was murdered while fishing through the ice on Assawompasett Pond at Middleboro by one of Philip's councillors, who with two others placed the body under the ice where it was discovered shortly afterwards. The murder was witnessed by an Indian on "King Philip's Lookout" situated nearby and testified to on the following spring. This led to the capture, trial and execution of the murderers, which so enraged Philip that he at once commenced hostilities. Several skirmishes took place in Middleboro but the records disclose but three deaths at the hands of the Indians, the inhabitants of the town having taken refuge in the fort previously constructed by order of the court.

. . . . With the fall of Philip, [August 12, 1676], there followed the close of the war in so far as it applied to the Colonies. . . . In June of the following year the former residents of Middleboro entered into an agreement to re-settle the town. They received a warrant from the Governor of the Colonies under the date of June 9, 1677, granted to them as the "Proprietors of the Towne of Middleberry," giving them the right to take re-possession of the territory which at that time consisted of the present Middleboro, the western part of Halifax from the Winnetuxet River and the whole of Lakeville, and to apportion the land among the former owners or their representatives and make necessary laws for its resettlement. A meeting was held for this purpose at Plymouth on the 27th of the same month, following which the sixty-seven "Proprietors of the Town" commenced the labor of rebuilding Middleboro. . .

## RECOLLECTIONS OF HELL'S BLAZES TAVERN

Just fifty years ago my father and two of my uncles bought the general store in South Middleboro where one of my uncles had already been working for over thirty years. This store was an old established concern operated by James M. Clark for many years before it took on its new name of Thomas Brothers. This was a typical country store—it sold groceries, grain, various kinds of cloth, farming tools, and household utensils. Most of the business was done by sending carts—peddle carts, so called—out into the surrounding communities. Each day three different carts went out and were gone all day—to Carver, Tremont, Rochester, etc. Actually, the driver made two trips per week on each of his appointed rounds. The first day he would take a load of grain that he knew would be wanted, and he would pick up the grocery order for the week. The next day he would go over the same route and deliver the orders taken the day before.

Driving a grocery cart in all sorts of weather and over poor roads was a rather strenuous job, and the hours were long. However, it was one of the best ways I can think of to make friends, learn about human nature, and pick up very interesting stories and worthwhile comments made by some very forthright and rugged individuals.

For several years I drove one of these routes for Thomas Brothers. One of the places where I particularly enjoyed stopping was at what is now called Hell's Blazes Tavern. During the 18th century it had been a stopping place for stage coaches, and since it wasn't always a place of quiet entertainment, it earned the name of Hell's Blazes. I think I had a great uncle who was shot there one evening when the proceedings got a little out of hand. Anyway, when I went there it was no longer a tavern but the home of Mr. and Mrs. Luther Holmes who were about ninety and their son Salathiel who was probably nearly seventy.

I am very sure that Mr. and Mrs. Holmes slept in a small bedroom off the kitchen that had no windows whatever. I recall noting with surprise how healthy they looked and it shook my faith in the generally accepted theory that good health demanded that bedroom windows be opened wide every night for fresh air no matter how cold or wet it might be. The well for the family water supply was out between the house and the street, and the water was brought up in a bucket. There was a pickarel that lived in the well, which was considered proof that the water was pure.

I recall several interesting stories and incidents connected with the Holmes family. One day, according to local tradition, Mrs. Holmes suggested to her son, Salathiel, that he sleep in the barn that night. Salathiel was rather surprised at the suggestion and wanted to know why. "So you can say that you have slept under another roof for once in your life," his mother replied.

Salathiel had never married, and after his parents died he was rather lonely and began to call on a lady who lived a few miles away. After this had been going on for some time, he happened to meet Al Merritt as he peddled his bicycle toward Tremont. Mr. Merritt was a sort of local preacher, and some of you will remember him as a fine baseball player here in Middleboro fifty years ago. Salathiel jumped off his bicycle and said, "Al, do you marry folks?" Mr. Merritt allowed that he did from time to time! Salathiel considered that for a few moments and then getting back on his bicycle said, "I'll be down Saturday night if it don't rain."

Well, that was a long time ago. The Holmes family is gone, and we have a modern eating establishment where they used to live; but sometimes when I drive down Route 28 and pass the house, I wish I could see Luther Holmes once again, leaning on his cane, tapping his way out to the barn!

Ernest Thomas



## THE CAUSES OF KING PHILIP'S WAR

by EDWARD M. PRATT, Dartmouth College, '76.

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Late in June of 1675, war broke out in the Southern colonies of New England. It was no ordinary war, but rather a bitter war of extermination waged by the Wampanoag, Nipmuck and Narragansett Indians on one side, and the English settlers of Plymouth, Massachusetts Bay, Rhode Island and Connecticut colonies on the other. It came to be known as King Philip's War and indeed, was perhaps the first major test for the blossoming English civilization of Southern New England. And it rapidly became clear that whichever side won would control the area's destiny for years to come.

King Philip's War was ultimately won by the English. But the loss to the colonies was staggering: over six hundred colonists were killed, or one out of every eleven men of age to bear arms; an estimated three hundred English women and children also perished. Over six hundred dwellings were burned, livestock was killed or chased away, thirteen settlements were totally wiped out, and many others were partially destroyed and subsequently deserted.<sup>1</sup> Douglas Leach, a noted expert on the war, has estimated that twenty years passed before English settlement in New England advanced to its pre-war limits, and forty years passed before settlement advanced significantly beyond its ante-bellum boundaries.

But if this war was staggering for the English, it was deadly for the Indians who fought them. The Indian forces were annihilated, their towns leveled, their property and land confiscated without recompense, and their culture was shattered. Never again would the once proud tribes of Southern New England threaten the English in this area. Their submission was total and forever.

But what caused King Philip's War? What events poisoned the once friendly and cooperative relationship between the Pilgrims and Massasoit and his people? Historians of the war point to several factors, but I think that in sum, three main things caused the war. First, the innate incompatibility of the two different cultures planted in the New England wilderness contributed to the final conflict. Secondly, the uncompromising and selfish attitude of the English also merits much blame for the deterioration of relations. To be sure, the Indians were not blameless in this respect, but were still far less culpable than their counterparts. And thirdly, Philip himself must bear some of the responsibility.

There are those who claim that from the start of European colonization, war between the whites and the red men was inevitable. Early relations between the two groups pointed in a different direction. From the beginning, the Wampanoag sachem, Massasoit, welcomed the English, aided them in almost every conceivable manner and allowed their settlement to survive at a time when he could easily have obliterated it. It is true, however, that Massasoit hoped to gain a military advantage over his enemies by means of help from English weaponry and technology.

However, intercourse between the Indians and the English was good for both. It allowed the Pilgrims to survive, and at the same time raised the Wampanoag standard of living through the introduction of guns and metal implements.<sup>2</sup> But as years passed, whites became economically independent of the Indians, and were no longer dependent on them for means of survival. Conversely, the Indian economy rapidly became inseparable from that of their neighbors. Thus early on, we have the framework for an economic conflict.

Basic to the deterioration of relations was the ever-increasing English control of the land.<sup>3</sup> Massasoit had been extremely generous to his English friends, alternately giving and selling (at low prices) huge tracts of land in Southeastern Massachusetts to them. His sons, Alexander and Philip continued the practice of selling land, but in order to pay their debts to English merchants.

The land "selling" problems arose in that the Indian culture had no concept of personal title to land. The money they accepted for the land, was in their eyes, a rent which allowed the English the right to use the land. And certainly, for the Indian, this "rent" did not preclude his continued use of the property alongside his "tenant". The colonists on the other hand, considered these transactions as final, conveying to them perpetual and exclusive ownership and title to the tract in question.

The misunderstanding was complete. It is easy to understand the mutual disillusionment that must have prevailed when the Indians went on to their mutual property to hunt, only to be chased off at gunpoint by a colonist irate at the trespasser.

Absentee ownership was also a problem. Frequently, the Indians would sell a piece of property to an Englishman, but the purchaser would not move onto the land or make any use of it. Consequently, the Indians would continue to live and hunt there, much to the dismay of the new owner. Such a situation is the documented Dedham, Massachusetts case, a problem that caused considerable friction over an extended period of years and resulted in the ultimate eviction of the Indian occupants.

Certainly by 1675, the Indians of the region were starting to feel crowded by the incessant encroachments and extensions of the English.<sup>4</sup> It was a situation conducive to problems.

Other conflicts between the different civilizations included English liquor and English justice. That English merchants sold firewater to the Indians cannot be denied, and the native lack of tolerance to it is well-documented. Drunken Indians were common, and they frequently got themselves into difficulty. But they could never understand why they should get into trouble because of a drink English traders were so eager to sell them. And when they did run into difficulty because of rum, or for any other reason, the Indians were always brought under English justice. In their tribal cultures, the Wampanoags and other tribes never had had an elaborate system of laws or courts, so the English concept and system of justice was alien to them. In addition, it was understandably very difficult to persuade an Indian that he was getting a fair and just trial in an English court. This legal discrepancy also contributed to the growing rift.



Another large point of conflict between white and red deals with their respective religions. During early relations, Massasoit insisted that the English make no attempts to Christianize his people.<sup>5</sup> Philip continued this opposition to conversion, but by 1675 fully a quarter of the tribal population of Southern New England was Christian. This religious attrition caused no little anxiety among Indian sachems, for it meant an erosion of their power and leverage. Despite protests by Philip and others to the English authorities, such men as the Rev. John Eliot continued their efforts with pagan Indians. These efforts gave rise to much mutual suspicion and antagonism, each side convinced of the others bad intents.

Throughout the first fifty years of relations between red and white in Southern New England, neither group was innocent of transgression or wrong. Indeed, trespass and theft was common to both sides. But after the first few years of settlement, and after the English had gained a stronger foothold in the area, they became increasingly intolerant and arrogant in their attitudes and actions with the Indians. More and more, the new settlers did exactly as they pleased, with little or no regard for the natives or their rights. As time passed,

“unprincipled men flocked to the colonies; the Indians were dispersed and often harshly treated; and the forbearance which marked the early intercourse of the Pilgrims with the natives was forgotten.”<sup>6</sup>

If the English wanted something, they frequently just took it. And if the Indian owner protested, he was bought off at a low price or referred to English justice. The attitude that Indians had no rights that the English were bound to respect was pervasive.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, the colonists and their leaders frequently interfered in inter- and intra-tribal disputes, imposing their will upon the natives either in order to maximize their personal gain, or to do what was “best” for tribal interests. While much of this meddling embittered some Indians against the English, it is interesting to note that it also frequently embittered tribes against one another. The fact that tribal rivalries and jealousies were so strong and acrimonious was one of the main reasons that the English were ultimately able to defeat their opponents. There can be no doubt but that a lack of powerful tribal unity, caused in part by the English, hurt the Indian cause.

Additionally, the general insistence by the English that the Indians accept all of English culture as a package was a catalyst in the deterioration of their relations. That the Indian should accept his religion as well as his rum was the virtually unanimous English opinion. And the Indian “savage” should be accordingly thankful for both. From the outset, the new colonists held the New England “heathen” in contempt. And one of these colonists’ principle desires from the very beginning was to bring these dirty natives into conformity with their own, higher level of civilization. This was a goal that was consciously pursued, even at the expense of native culture. The absolute insistence on this acceptance was unwavering, and caused the Indians to be most resentful.

Similarly, the English attitude towards King Philip was arrogant and intolerant. Three times the colonial government of Plymouth forced him to sign agreements contrary to his peoples’ best interests, and humiliated him in front of his followers. The leaders of the colonial governments consistently failed to treat Philip and other sachems with the respect due them as leaders of their tribes. Rather, the English were condescending and patronizing, and generally insisted that the English wishes and policy take precedence over Indian policy.

Perhaps the most brazen instance of English arrogance as far as the Indians were concerned, was the arrest and trial of three Wampanoag Indians for the murder of a fourth.<sup>8</sup> An Indian preacher named Sassamon was apparently murdered for having informed Plymouth officials as to Philip’s whereabouts. The Wampanoags and other Indians as well denied that the three men on trial had anything to do with the “murder”, or indeed, that Sassamon had ever been murdered at all. When the English ultimately executed the three Wampanoags for the murder, it infuriated the Indians.

As far as the various tribes were concerned, Sassamon’s “murder” was an Indian problem, and as such, should be dealt with by Indians in their own way. English interference in a matter such as this, which was none of their business, was the most blatant example yet of just how far past the acceptable limit the English had gone. For the Indian of Southern New England, this was the proverbial straw that broke the camel’s back. The colonists had simply gone too far.

Thus we can see that the English disposition towards the Native Americans was not at all well designed to foster cordial relations with them. Indeed, we can see that it did much to poison those very relations. At this point, “the Indians of the region had grievances enough to drive them to rebellion.”<sup>9</sup>

No consideration of the causes of King Philip’s War would be complete without considering Metacomet, the man for whom the conflict is named.

Son of Massasoit, Philip became sachem of the Wampanoags in 1662, after the death of his brother, Alexander. By all indications, Philip was a skilled diplomat and a good, though not great leader.<sup>10</sup> As noted earlier, he shared his father’s opposition to English attempts to convert his people to Christianity. He also believed that he and his people were equal to the colonists, not subject to them.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, Philip was an intelligent and perceptive man who saw

“that the English intended, by their proceedings, to crush out his own native race, and to take this domain entirely and exclusively to themselves.”<sup>12</sup>

Such a realization undoubtedly caused Philip quite some concern.

Understanding his people’s predicament, Philip did his best to circumvent it. He tried to withdraw his people from potentially dangerous situations, and tried to minimize contact with whites on dangerous issues. He even tried to play the colonies off against one another in order to gain concessions

for his race.<sup>13</sup> Importantly though, Philip realized his Wampanoags could not resist the powerful English alone. Accordingly, he tried to unite all the regional tribes in a loose bargaining confederation in order to gain more leverage with the various colonial governments.

Nothing might have ever resulted from the growing range of problems between red and white in this area had it not been for Philip. He was a proud, vain man above all else. And he was extremely quick to take affront at any personal offense, be it real or imagined. So when the English arrested him and brought him to court on three different occasions to answer questions regarding his tribal alliances, he became irreversibly insulted. After the third of these court appearances at which Philip was forced to admit his personal guilt, his anger and outrage began to crystallize. His dissatisfaction with growing English power changed to a determination to rid his nation of them.

It is unclear whether genuine concern for his people or a personal vengeance drove Philip to press for a military alliance against the English settlers. I would venture that the genuine concern was there all along, but that it was Philip's hurt pride and vanity that motivated him to action against the "invaders." In the following months Philip diligently sought the active assistance of neighboring tribes for a future war against the English. And he succeeded in securing the Nipmucks of central Massachusetts and the Narragansetts of Rhode Island as allies.

But "Philip himself lacked those personal qualities of leadership which made Pontiac and Tecumseh formidable"<sup>14</sup>, and his alliance foundered before it ever really got started. Because of bitter tribal rivalries, he failed to enlist the aid of such key tribes as the powerful Mohegans. This group along with the "Praying Indians" would be a great help to the colonists cause, actively giving them military aid.

Philip was responsible for the formation of the original conspiracy against the English. But once formed, he rapidly lost control of it until he was little more than a leader among leaders. The actual fighting began before the conspiracy was complete, and before the combined Indian tribes were ready for it. And the Indians went on to lose to the English for a variety of reasons.

I think then, that it is fair to say that King Philip's War was the culmination of unresolvable cultural differences and because of a belligerent, insistent English attitude. To be sure, the conspiring Indians were not innocent in this respect. But the intensity of the hostile English attitude was far greater, and a larger factor in causing the conflict. Philip provided an intelligence and a personality suitable to serve as a catalyst; he was the spark necessary to ignite Southern New England's already smoldering hatred, contempt and tragic misunderstanding.

When the conflagration ended, here in the English colonies of New England "(had) ended forever the last great struggle that foreshadowed the final fate of the red man on this continent."<sup>15</sup>

## PEACE BE TO THEIR MEMORY!

### FOOTNOTES

1. Ellis, George W. and Morris, John E., *King Philip's War*, (New York: The Grafton Press, 1906), p.288.
2. Ibid., p. 19.
3. Leach, Douglas E., *Flintlock and Tomahawk: New England in King Philip's War*, (New York: Macmillan, 1955), p. 14.
4. Morison, Samuel Eliot, *The Oxford History of the American People*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 108.
5. Abbott, Jacob, *King Philip*, (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1900), p. 160.
6. Ibid., p. 162.
7. Sylvester, Herbert M., *Indian Wars of New England* vol II (Boston: W. B. Clarke Company, 1910), p. 160.
8. Leach, *Op. Cit.*, p. 36.
9. Bodge, George Madison, *Soldiers in King Philip's War*, (Boston: Rockwell and Churchill Press, 1896). p. 26.
10. Ellis and Morris, *Op. Cit.*, p. 46.
11. Ibid. p. 44.
12. Caverly, Robert Boodey, *History of the Indian Wars of New England*, (Boston: James H. Eale & Co., 1882), p. 142.
13. Leach, *Op. Cit.*, p. 27.
14. Ellis and Morris, *Op. Cit.*, p. 46.
15. Caverly, *Op. Cit.*, p. 231.

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4. Drake, Samuel Gardner. *The Old Indian Chronicle*, Boston: Antiquarian Institute, 1836.
5. Ellis, George W. and Morris, John E., *King Philip's War*, New York: The Grafton Press, 1906, pp. 19-68, 281-289.
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7. Leach, Douglas E. *Flintlock and Tomahawk: New England in King Philip's War*, New York: Macmillan, 1955.
8. Morison, Samuel Eliot. *The Oxford History of the American People*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1965, pp. 107-11.
9. Sylvester, Herbert M., *Indian Wars of New England* vol. II Boston: W. B. Clarke Company, 1910, pp. 189-380.
10. Tompson, Benjamin. *New England Crisis*, Boston: The Club of Odd Volumes, 1894.



HOME OF MELINDA MITCHELL, (PRINCESS TEWEELEEMA).

Home of The Indians — Lakeville, Mass.











